





## news

Building recovery: Eddie George tells Treasury Committee that caution may benefit economy more in long-term

## Bank ready to fight Clarke on rate cut



Eddie George: Not yet time for cut in interest rates

PAUL WALLACE and COLIN BROWN

Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, has hinted that he will oppose a cut in interest rates when he meets Kenneth Clarke next Wednesday.

Tory MPs anxiously hoping for a rate cut to fuel the "feel-good factor" after a lacklustre Budget were infuriated by his remarks.

The vice-chairman of the Conservative backbench finance committee of MPs, David Shaw, last night said his committee backed the Chancellor against Mr George's judge-

ment. "The officers of the finance committee are absolutely united in backing the Chancellor's stance on interest rates. All of us believe that by Easter there will be at least one or two small interest rate cuts of one-quarter per cent each."

In evidence to the Treasury Select Committee, Mr George said the Bank was "very conscious of the idea that January is a key month for wage settlements". If the Ford pay offer of 9.5 per cent over two years were to become a benchmark for settlements, it would be "a very serious situation", and this would not become clear until well into January.

Another risk to the inflationary outlook could come from the renewed weakness of the pound, leading to a rise in import prices. Mr George reminded the committee that "the central bank's guess" of the Bank's inflation report in November was that inflation was still not on track to meet the Government's target of 2.5 per cent or less in two years' time.

Since that report, the pound has fallen by a further 2 per cent against a basket of currencies. A further concern would be if the recent rapid growth in the amount of money in the economy were to persist. Mr George told the committee: "We will err

consistently on the side of not taking risks with inflation."

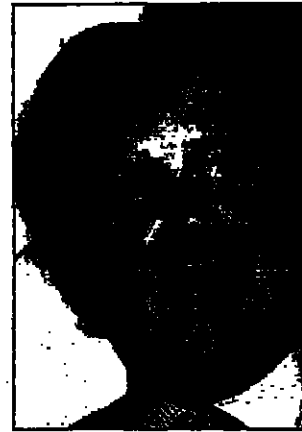
The chairman of the Conservative Party, Brian Mawhinney, gave the clearest hint after the Budget that interest rates would fall, to help fulfil the Government's hopes that the cautious Budget would pave the way for a general election victory. Cuts in interest rates are vital to the overall strategy for reducing the cost of home loans, putting more money in people's pockets, boosting the housing market, and lifting Tory Party morale.

Senior Tory MPs said the economic fundamentals were sufficiently sound to justify an

interest rate cut as early as next Wednesday. But they believe the clash with Mr George is not sufficiently serious to force the Governor into resignation.

Eddie George conceded for the first time that if interest rates had been raised as he requested in May, the economy would have lost even more momentum this year. He said Mr Clarke had been lucky to get away with his decision. "I think it turned out very fortunately for him," referring to the subsequent rally in the value of the pound, he said. "We were bailed out of that frankly by a change of sentiment to the dollar."

Comment, page 25



Kenneth Clarke: Pressure from backbenchers

## New driving licence 'set to act as ID'

KATHERINE BUTLER  
Brussels

Britain won the right yesterday to operate a new European credit card-style driving licence as a national identity card.

EU transport ministers endorsed the voluntary introduction of a uniform plastic licence for the 15-member states from July 1996. But Britain requested that the nationality of the bearer should be displayed on the front of the card alongside a photograph, and other data such as name, date of birth, and licence expiry date.

A number of other states voiced hostility to the British plan because of the implications for civil liberties, but agreed to a compromise which allows governments to include nationality or other "non-motoring" information—for example a national insurance number or the fact that the driver is an organ donor—on the back of the card.

They insisted, however, that the inclusion of nationality or other information should be conditional on the written consent of the licence holder.

Then European Transport Commissioner Neil Kinnock, pre-empting charges that Brussels was imposing identity cards on Britain through the back door, issued a statement stressing that the primary function of the card is a driving licence.

British officials denied that yesterday's agreement brings closer the introduction of compulsory identity papers. It simply left open the possibility of operating a dual-function

licence/ID card which was one of six options outlined in a Home Office Green Paper last May.

Under existing European directives driving licences do not identify the holder's nationality, so a dual-function card would have been impossible without yesterday's compromise. "If we decide to pursue the introduction of identity cards in Britain, this is now one of the options open to us," a British official said.

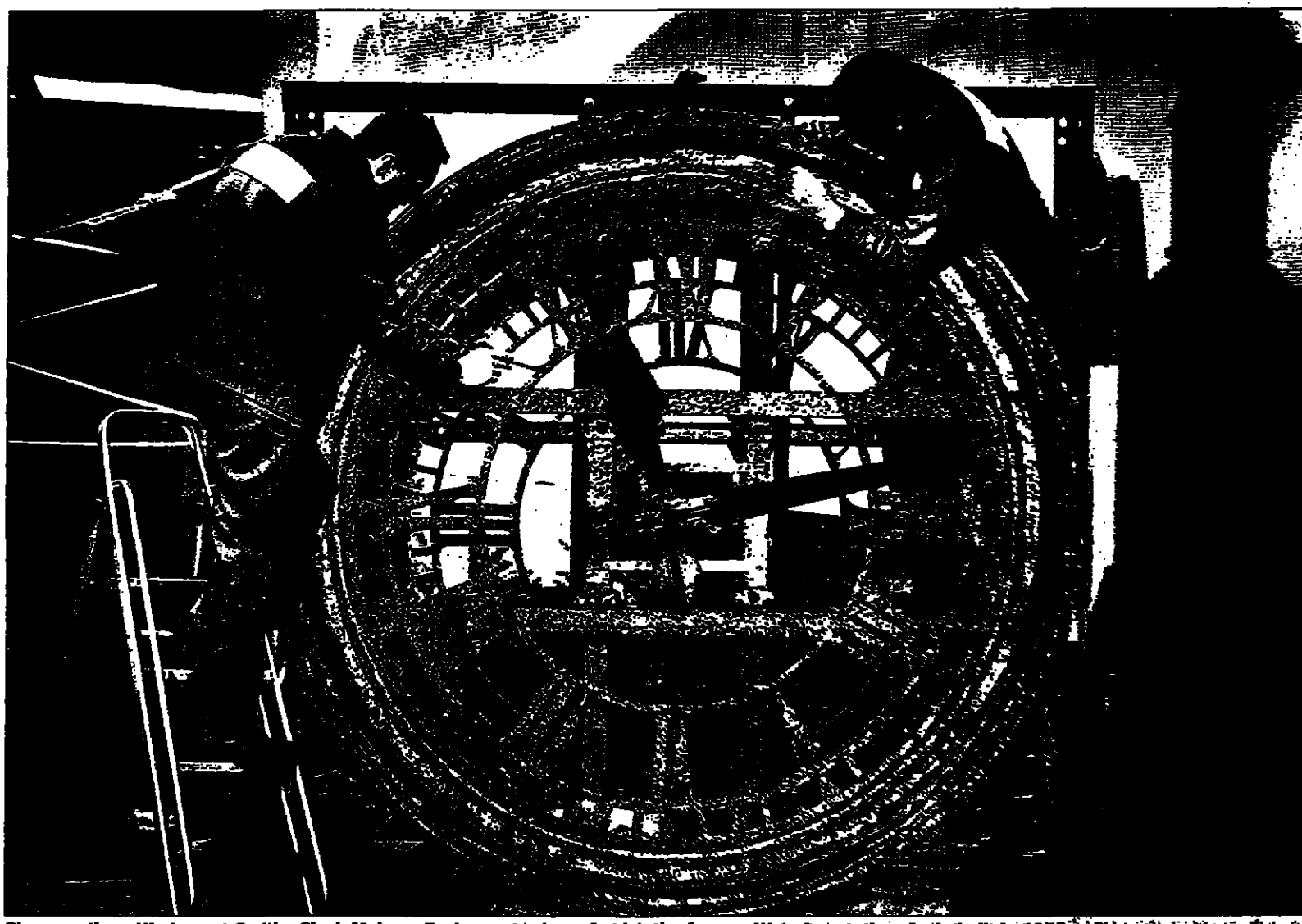
The new-style licence will be optional for member states but most, including Britain, are enthusiastic about switching from the existing pink paper version. The EU's 12 gold stars on a blue background will adorn the card, and the back will carry symbols of the various vehicle categories to allow instant recognition throughout the member states.

Earlier plans for the inclusion of a microchip carrying additional information which could be electronically read by police have been scrapped.

At Westminster, Graham Allen, Labour's transport spokesman, claimed the decision was a defeat for the Home Secretary Michael Howard, writes John Rentoul.

"This looks like sleight of hand—the Tories were trying to amend an EU proposal to create the basis for introducing a UK identity card by the back door," he said.

He added that the decision meant Mr Howard could not bring in the weakest of his plans for what would effectively be an ID card for Britain.



Clean up time: Workers at Smiths Clock Makers, Derby, yesterday refurbish the famous Waterloo station clock, built in 1922. Photograph: Martin Rickett

## Police launch investigation into intelligence unit

FROM FRONT PAGE

Established in April 1992 with a mission to spearhead the gathering of information about the activities of major criminals NCIS now has around 500 staff spread around the country and

a £25 million annual budget.

Its officers do not make arrests themselves, but gather, analyse and process intelligence into "packages" which they pass on to other forces which pursue the investigation. Under plans for a national police force, it will be given an operational wing

drawn from the country's existing six regional crime squads, which deal with serious offences. This will enable the force to target specific criminals and make arrests.

The security services are expected to work alongside NCIS officers in carrying out surveil-

lance and analysing data.

In the 1980s, Mr Stevens headed the multi-force inquiry into allegations of collusion between terrorist groups the security forces in Northern Ireland. The investigation concluded only recently and as a result of substantial changes were

made to army recruiting policy and the handling of security documents. Subsequently 46 people were convicted of offences ranging from conspiracy to murder to breaches of the Official Secrets Act, and sentenced to a total of more than 800 years in prison.

## Six horses killed by poison grass

JOHN MCKIE

Six horses—including one belonging to a former Olympic three-day eventer—have died in the past three weeks after eating a freak batch of thrashed rye grass, it was revealed yesterday.

The manufacturers of big bale process grass, Eurobale, yesterday admitted they were "mortified" at the deaths and last week spent "thousands of pounds" recalling a batch which they bought from an unnamed farmer in Skegness.

The batch is responsible for the fatal poisoning of the six horses, all of which suffered the symptoms of botulism. Botulism, a usually fatal cause of food poisoning, tends to kill only one horse a year on average in this country.

The first horse to die was at de Montfort University in Lincoln three weeks ago. More than a week later, Alfred, an experienced eventer, died in the Grantham yard of Tiny Clapham. Miss Clapham, a former Olympic rider, is trying to save two of her other horses

which have taken the bale by using an anti-serum available from Cury's Hospital.

Last Wednesday, the 18-year-old cob Blue, belonging to exhibitor Hazel Armstrong-Small, was put down at its home in Epping, Essex. Other horses in Lambourn and Kent have also died from the bales.

Nottingham-based bale manufacturers Eurobale, which has produced 11,218 tonnes of forage for race horses and riding stock since 1993, has not previously suffered any problems.

Richard Brooks, who runs the company with his father Geoff, said last night: "We were mortified to discover the deaths and would like to express deep concern for the owners. We always grow our own grass and we only bought from this farmer in July because it was a dry summer. We won't be buying from him again."

Eurobale have sent samples of the tainted grass to the Ministry of Agriculture's agricultural development and advisory service and are cooperating with a full inquiry.

## Road chaos as cold sets in for weekend

The cold weather affecting Britain created more chaos on the country's roads and railways yesterday as weather forecasters predicted temperatures would drop further.

Although no new snowfalls are expected, weathermen warned freezing fog was likely to affect much of the country, making driving conditions treacherous.

A spokesman for the London Weather Centre warned of freezing temperatures as low as minus 5C (23F).

"We have had some snow showers in various parts of the country but it is coming to an end. By tomorrow as fresh snow is likely for a few days."

The next problem will be freezing fog. There will be some tonight, in eastern and central England, and in Northern Ireland. It will be a real problem especially on Saturday when there will be areas of freezing fog and cold weather," he said.

The south of England took the brunt of the bad weather yesterday with parts of the



Winter coat: Weathermen predict temperatures of -5C

coastal region being turned into a "skating rink", according to the AA motoring organisation.

Driving conditions became appalling on several major roads in Kent, Hampshire and Sussex, with black ice and more heavy snow, it said.

Affected routes included the M20 and A21 in Kent, the M27 in Hampshire and the A259 in Hastings, East Sussex, where snow forced several motorists to abandon their vehicles.

By 4pm yesterday the AA said it had had rescued 16,500 motorists, with flat batteries and frozen cooling systems mostly to blame.

The RAC said it had dealt with 14,000 emergency calls in a 12-hour period yesterday.

"Approximately a third of those were in London and the Home Counties, where we have been extremely busy," a spokesman said. Motorists were advised not to go out without a blanket and hot flask.

## Judge to rule on railways' future

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR  
Transport Correspondent

The future of rail privatisation will be decided in the High Court today when a judge rules on whether the Government was wrong to allow potential cuts in services.

Yesterday, in a legal challenge to privatisation, Nigel Fleming QC, for the anti-privatisation group Save our Railways, said that the franchising director, Roger Salmon, should not have set minimum service levels for new operators which were well below the present timetable.

Mr Fleming said that the then Secretary of State, John MacGregor, had issued clear instructions in March 1994 that the service levels should be broadly the same before and after franchising.

However, when Mr Salmon, who acts under the direction of the Secretary of State for Transport, had drawn up "Passenger Service Requirements" (PSRs) for the first lines to be franchised, they required operators only to run a percentage of ex-

isting trains. Mr Fleming read out a number of letters from rail passengers and campaigners who had analysed the new PSRs and in many cases the proposed services were well below those currently run by British Rail.

Mr Fleming said that when the Railways Bill was being debated in Parliament in 1993 the message from the Government was: "Don't worry about existing levels of services. When we franchise, the existing level at that time will be the level that is franchised. Trust us on this."

The emphasis of guidelines and instructions given to Mr Salmon was on getting value for money and on flexibility.

Mr Justice Macpherson will give his judgment this afternoon and has said it will apply to all seven of the first franchises.

If Save our Railways is successful, Mr Salmon will have to postpone his announcement of the successful bidders, which is scheduled for next Tuesday, and the Government may be forced to start the whole franchising process from scratch, causing months of delays.

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Ashby  
abuse

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RUNNING THE BIRM

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MP's libel case: Tory 'confessed he was homosexual' as his 29-year marriage fell apart, court is told

# Ashby's wife tells of 'abuse and rejection'

REBECCA FOWLER

As a public airing of the private nightmare of a marriage, it had the lot. The wife of Tory MP David Ashby told a libel jury how he physically abused her, refused sex and eventually confessed he was a homosexual.

Silvana Ashby, 53, who spoke in a hoarse Italian accent, told the jury yesterday that she felt constantly rejected by her husband. On one occasion, she said, he held a pillow over her face after an argument, and he said she should book appointments if she wished to talk to him.

Mrs Ashby was giving evidence against her husband in his libel case against the *Sunday Times* and Andrew Neil, its former editor. Mr Ashby denies he is a homosexual.

When the couple agreed to separate in October 1993, Mrs Ashby tearfully told the court, her husband said he had had a brief encounter with a man some years ago on a holiday in the Seychelles, and confessed he was gay. "I used to say to him 'you're different, I don't understand you any more. You've changed, that you like the company of men more than women,'" Mrs Ashby said.

"He came into the kitchen and said 'I've got to tell you something, I have changed', and he started to cry... I said to him 'if you change once, can't you change again?' He said 'it's not as easy as that'. When she asked what he meant, he said: 'I had an encounter many years ago. Then I put it out of my mind and now I can't'."

Fighting back tears, Mrs Ashby told the court: "I was in no doubt that he was telling me he was homosexual." She denied she had used words like "poof" or "poofy" to her husband.

Asked about her reaction to what her husband had told her, she said: "In a way I was pleased, because I knew there was nothing wrong with me. I



Alleged relationship: David Ashby (left) and Dr Ciaran Kilduff

had thought for years that I was a terrible person and that that was why he didn't like me."

As Mr Ashby sat on the other side of the courtroom, often resting his head in his hands, Mrs Ashby, dressed in a pale blue jumper and pearls, clutched a handkerchief and told the jury how her marriage fell apart.

The couple met on a skiing holiday in 1964, and both described it as "love at first sight". They spoke in French because neither understood the other's native tongue.

They married in a Roman Catholic church the following year and Mrs Ashby moved from Italy to Chelsea.

But Mrs Ashby said she was isolated by her husband, a barrister, from the start of their marriage. "He was always at work, and at weekends he was out playing rugby."

"I couldn't speak the language, I had no friends, no relatives. I said to my husband 'can you be at home more?' he said 'I'll buy you a dog instead'."

When Mr Ashby became MP for Leicestershire North-West in 1983, Mrs Ashby said he told her she was now irrelevant to him. "He said 'remember for you I am dead, I don't exist for you any more. I will dedicate myself to my work'."

Mrs Ashby also described her sex life as "not very satisfactory" to Richard Hartley QC for the *Sunday Times*. At first she said she took Mr Ashby's indifference to her affections as typical English coldness, but she felt increasingly rejected.

After Mr Ashby returned from a visit to his brother, Brian, who was openly homosexual, in the US, Mrs Ashby said her husband finched when she put her arm around him. "He pushed me aside and said 'don't touch me, don't touch me, never touch me again'."

Mrs Ashby continued: "He was always very cross, very angry. I'd say 'please talk to me', he'd say 'I have no time' and leave the house slamming the door. On occasions he'd say 'make an appointment if you want to talk to me, come and see me in my office'."

Although Mrs Ashby said she had been suspicious of her husband's relations with men, including Tim, a young parliamentary researcher, she said she did not become aware he was homosexual until later.

When Mr Ashby left her in 1993, after 28 years of marriage, to live in a flat in Putney, Mrs Ashby believed he was having an affair with his neighbour, Dr Ciaran Kilduff, 32. Both men deny physical intimacy.

But Mrs Ashby said she still loved her husband. "If you love someone you trust them fully, and I loved David more than my life," she said. "I still do."

The case continues.



Silvana Ashby: 'He'd say make an appointment if you want to talk to me'

## Mental patients to be treated with art

DECCA AITKENHEAD

Patients with mental health problems are to be prescribed painting, sculpting and creative writing on the NHS, instead of drugs. "Arts On Prescription", a radical new scheme launched this week, will enable doctors to treat depression and anxiety by sending chronic sufferers to art classes.

A pilot scheme is to begin in various economically deprived areas of Manchester. Participating GPs, consultants, community psychiatric nurses and social workers will refer patients who suffer from mental health complaints like panic attacks to an Arts and Mental Health Nurse. The patients will then be offered a range of art classes, from drama and dance to ceramics and photography, and, after consultation, be prescribed a 10-week course.

Like any other NHS medical treatment, the art classes will be free. Annual costs of £10,000 will be met jointly by Stockport Health Authority and the local council.

"People find these sorts of expressive activities, done in a group, give them a chance to develop their confidence and self-esteem, and give them a social contact at a level they are comfortable," a community mental health team spokeswoman said.

"Mental ill-health is a huge burden on the NHS, and shows itself through many physical and mental problems. This treatment gets us out of looking at everything from a problem-based viewpoint."

A typical patient, she said, would be a woman with a family and little time to herself, struggling with relationship difficulties and suffering from low self-esteem, insomnia and lack of motivation. "You can give her a dose of Prozac and hope she'll get better, but you are never going to solve the problem unless you tackle how she deals with her life."

The severely disturbed and suicidal will not be eligible for the classes, to be taught by artists with no medical training in local church halls and social clubs. Schizophrenics and manic depressives in a stable condition may take part, though.

Arts On Prescription was inspired by an earlier Manchester project, Exercise On Prescription, where GPs prescribed free sessions in the gym or the swimming pool to patients with coronary problems. Participants reported that the greatest improvements had been to mental rather than physical well-being, and demand grew for arts-based activities.

## New wheelie-bins give pensioners a clean break

### CLEANING THE BIN

Try putting newspaper in the bottom of the bin to absorb any moisture.

The smooth plastic sides are easy to wash and putting the bin on its side will help you tackle the job.

A detail from Wakefield council's leaflet on wheelie-bins

GLENDIA COOPER

A growing number of elderly people in West Yorkshire are in hospital with broken limbs after falling into new council wheelie-bins.

In Pontefract, where the large grey bins replaced conventional dustbins several months ago, there has been a "significant" rise in wheelie-bin related incidents. In attempts to clean the bins, pensioners have fallen across or into the bins or been knocked over by them.

Staff at the fracture clinic of Pontefract General Infirmary noticed a larger number of old people coming in with fractures to arms and legs and discovered that the injuries were linked by close encounters with the bins, which have two and a half times the capacity of their old ones.

Bridget Gill, marketing manager of the infirmary, said that there were three ways in which old people were injuring themselves. "Many people fractured their wrists by standing on something and then leaning

into the bin and toppling over on to it," she said.

"There was one chap who clambered into a bin to stamp down the rubbish and fractured his ankle in the process. And people trying to move the bins in a strong wind get knocked over. There's a wide variety of injuries."

Wakefield council introduced the wheelie-bins in June and sent round a leaflet explaining its advantages and advice on cleaning it. "Try putting newspaper in the bottom to absorb

any moisture. The smooth plastic sides are easy to wash and putting the bin on its side will help tackle the job," it read.

Ms Gill said that elderly people had been disregarding the guidance: "They were told not to put themselves in a position of danger. They were simply not following instructions."

She did not know why Pontefract had become a hot spot for wheelie-bin victims: "It may well be prevalent in other places but maybe they don't talk about it so much," she suggested.

John Skidmore, Wakefield's cleansing services manager, said he was "not aware of any particular problems regarding injuries to members of the public as a result of the wheeled-bin system of refuse collection".

He stressed that the public must follow instructions given to clean their bins safely, but said that anyone with a particular problem should contact their wheeled-bin helpline.

Whether that is before or after they end up in the bin, he did not specify.

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## news

## Calls grow for 'mad cow' inquiry



To beef or not to beef: Shoppers outside a butcher's in the Victoria Centre, Southend

Photograph: Nick Turpin

## Beef scare: Major rejects human link as consumer groups press for action

CHARLES ARTHUR, LOUISE JURY and CATHY NEWMAN

The Prime Minister was forced yesterday to defend British beef in the Commons as calls grew for an independent inquiry into the risks posed to humans by mad cow disease.

As Labour MPs and consumer watchdogs called for a separate inquiry to investigate whether mad cow disease could cause its human equivalent, John Major told MPs: "There is currently no scientific evidence that BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] can be transmitted to humans or that eating beef causes CJD [Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease] in humans. That issue is not in question."

Yet government reassurances appeared to be failing, as more than 1,150 schools announced they have cut beef from lunch menus or are offering alternatives. And leading scientists raised fears that industrial techniques used in abattoirs could still be spreading the infection into meat. The National Consumer Council urged tighter regulations for slaughterhouses to ensure that potentially dangerous offal did not slip into food.

Nigel Griffiths, Labour consumer affairs spokesman, said: "People are confused and they want to know whether or not they should be eating beef."

Sue Dibb, co-director of the independent watchdog, the Food Commission, said: "I think nobody is trusting what is coming out of government any more. The Government seems to be more interested in proping up the beef industry than admitting that there may be a risk, however small it may be."

She said she was not satisfied by the position of the Spon-

form Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC), composed of eight independent scientists who advise the Government on BSE. "Being advisers means that the minister doesn't have to act on or publish their advice," Ms Dibb said.

The Consumers' Association said a public inquiry could help give people the information they needed.

BSE was first identified in 1986, but the controversy over the risk to public health took on renewed life last week when Sir Bernard Tomlinson, a former government medical adviser, said he had stopped eating anything containing beef offal.

Scientists' present fears about the risk posed by eating beef have begun to focus on procedures used in slaughterhouses to remove the brains and spinal cords from carcasses.

The brain and spine are known to be the most infectious parts of the animal, and since 1989 regulations have said that they should not be consumed.

In many cases abattoir workers remove the spinal cord by cutting into the spine with a water-cooled circular saw, and scientists fear this could spread infective spinal material on to meat.

The Ministry of Agriculture admitted last night that its 780 inspectors, who check meat before it leaves British slaughterhouses, would probably not witness the method used to remove the spine.

Schools in Avon, Cleveland, Essex, Hertfordshire, Lancashire, Surrey, Staffordshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Wiltshire and West Glamorgan have taken beef off menus. At least 11 other areas have banned products containing beef offal, such as liver.

## Degrees 'need a benchmark'

WENDY BERLINER

Education Correspondent

Minimum standards for what constitutes a university degree or a graduate in the highly expanded modern university system were called for yesterday by the Government's adviser on higher education.

Degree courses which did not reach these minimum standards would, by implication, lose their funding and students who do not possess graduate attributes would not get a degree.

In a far-reaching report on graduate standards published yesterday, the Higher Education Quality Council says it is now impossible to know whether degrees in the same subject at different universities are comparable.

The HEQC report is the first attempt to promote nationally accepted threshold standards in the university system. It follows the enormous expansion of the university sector when the polytechnics became universities in 1992. There are now 104 universities, four times the number there were in the early 1960s, and 1.5 million students, six times the number 30 years ago.

On top of this there has

been a proliferation of new subjects taught at university and a huge change in the entrance tickets held by students. The typical student of the early 1960s was middle to upper class, from a public school or grammar school, and had two A levels. Now a much wider band of social background and ability go to university.

The lecturers, too, are less homogeneous. Put together, it means the old system of comparing standards, in which lecturers from one institution act as external examiners at another, is no longer effective.

Dr Peter Wright, assistant director of the HEQC, said yesterday: "Standards may be rising, they may be falling. One cannot tell. The outcomes of higher education must be made much more explicit. We are not saying they must all be the same, but we do need to know what is genuine diversity and what is an inappropriate variation in standards."

□ *Graduate Standards Programme. Interim Report. Higher Education Quality Council. £10. Available from the Support Section, UCAS, Fulton House, Jessop Avenue, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 3SH.*

## Girls face school ban over rugby coaching

STEVE BOGGAN

Two girls may be banned from a school for refusing to take part in rugby coaching.

Lucy Gregory, 13, and her sister, Katie, 11, have been caught up in a row between their parents, who believe the sport is aggressive and dangerous, and the school's board of governors, who argue that the version of rugby on the curriculum is harmless.

Both sides in the argument at Purbrook Park School, near Havant, Hampshire, have taken legal advice that could lead to the girls being excluded in the new year.

The row erupted last month when Lucy told her parents, Caroline, 40, and Peter, 41, that she had been instructed to buy a rugby jersey and a gumshield in order to play the game. Mrs Gregory made inquiries and was told that the school's PE curriculum demanded that all 760 boys and girls had to take part in nine hours a year of tag rugby, which involves passing and scoring tries without physical contact. Pupils wear ribbons that must be pulled to represent a tackle.

"I have no problem with tag rugby because that isn't violent, but I was told that the girls must also take part in lessons to teach them how to tackle prop-



No choice: Lucy (left) and Katie Gregory, whose parents insist they must be allowed to opt out of playing rugby

erty," Mrs Gregory said. "Now that involves serious physical contact and neither of my daughters wanted to do it. The school said the lessons would be supervised but they still involve the risk of injury, otherwise why would a gumshield be necessary?"

The matter came to a head on 22 November when, during a meeting with the school's curriculum committee, the Gregorys said they had been advised that to force the girls into physical contact would represent "trespass on the person by design". The governors adjourned the meeting and took

legal advice. On 24 November, Elizabeth Tullett, the chairwoman, wrote to say the girls had to play rugby and added: "This involves tackling and we are not prepared to change this." She said the Gregorys had to agree to the girls playing rugby or remove them from the school.

"It is diabolical that someone can force children to play rugby against their will," Mr Gregory said. "I played the game for four years and lost four teeth, had my ear half-ripped off and damaged my knee—but that was my choice. These people aren't giving my daughters a choice."

Mrs Gregory said she would not remove the girls from the school, but neither would she agree to their taking part in tackling lessons.

Both girls have continued to attend the grant-maintained school but neither is playing rugby. Lucy has been excused because she has water on the knee and Katie becomes eligible only after Christmas. That is when the matter is likely to come to a head.

Michael Dopson, the headmaster, said he was resigned to the school's emerging as the villain of the piece, but higher principles were at stake.

"If we allow one pupil to choose what they will and will not do, we will have to allow all the others as well," he said. "Then it could spill over into lessons. What would I say when a parent said: 'Excuse me, but I don't want my child taught about the Holocaust'?"

"The Rugby Football Union has confirmed that our rugby lessons are safe, and schools inspectors actually praised our curriculum in the summer. During the whole term, real tackling amounts to just 20 minutes."

Lucy Gregory said: "I like the school and I don't want to leave it. But rugby is an aggressive sport. I wouldn't like to be hurt, but I would feel even worse if I hurt a friend."

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# Viewers uneasy at broadcasters' sex guidelines

MARIANNE MACDONALD  
Media Correspondent

Viewers are still heavily dependent on the timing of a television programme to decide whether it is likely to have sex, violence or swearing in it.

According to research by the Broadcasting Standards Council, most still rely on the 9pm watershed to decide whether programmes will be suitable for children or not, and nearly all want more information about programme content.

The BSC survey of 1,000 men and women, published yesterday, found that 86 per cent of people were in favour of the 9pm watershed, but 41 per cent wanted it to be later at the weekend.

Respondents were divided over whether the 9pm crossover point should apply to news, with 40 per cent saying it should and 52 per cent saying it should not. Only 9 per cent did not want a watershed on satellite or cable television.

Most viewers did not want all broadcasting to be suitable for children, but felt strongly that schedulers should put programmes out at an appropriate time. There was still marked unease about sex and violence,

with viewers expressing concern about a lesbian kiss shown in *EastEnders*. Broadcast warnings of adult material – which could take the form of symbols in listings pages – were backed by 94 per cent of respondents. Of those, 77 per cent thought rape scenes and “distressing scenes about children” might require a warning. Violence was cited by 74 per cent, “extreme sex” by 71 per cent and bad language by 65 per cent.

The researchers also asked men and women to recreate their personal television schedule from memory, naming the transmission days and times of programmes.

The differences between the male and female schedules reveals the macho factor of programmes such as *Panorama* and *Newsnight* and the F-factor of shows such as *2point4children* and *Bramwell*.

The embarrassingly blank spaces also reveal the long-running shows which have failed to find a place in the nation's psyche, such as *Wish You Were Here*, *Dispatches* and *Horizon*.

Surprisingly, perhaps, the men's mental list showed knowledge of the day and time of a number of daytime pro-

grammes, including *Home & Away*, *Neighbours* and *Star Trek*.

Although very similar, the women's daytime list also included programmes squarely aimed at a female audience such as *This Morning* and *Oprah*. They also listed *Grandstand*, but unlike the men, were aware of the Saturday omnibus edition of *Brookside*.

It will be a relief to many to learn that the BBC's *Nine O'Clock News* and ITV's *News at Ten* were listed by both men and women. But Channel 4's 7pm bulletin – which attracts an older audience – did not get a mention.

Audience reactions to particular scenes in programmes were also examined. A quarter of respondents said of a lesbian kiss in *EastEnders* that such material should not be in a soap opera at all, while 29 per cent felt it should not have been shown at the time scheduled.

In contrast, viewers did not react badly to a scene in *Emmerdale* that showed a violent raid on a post office and the taking of a hostage.

Ninety-four per cent said guidance on the content of programmes should be available on listings pages.



Light relief: Children from London schools taking part in a candle-lit service at Westminster Abbey yesterday. Organised by the Children's Society, the event was designed to encourage the pupils to think of those less fortunate during the Christmas period. Photograph: Geraint Lewis

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## Flexibility at work costs staff dear

BARRIE CLEMENT  
Labour Editor

Britain's increasingly flexible working methods provide employers with considerable advantages but yield few benefits for their employees, according to research published today by the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Part-time and temporary working offers organisations a means of cutting labour costs, responding to business fluctuations and extending operating hours, but the predominantly female staff are low paid and have few chances of promotion.

The study, conducted by Industrial Relations Services among 30 companies in retail and finance, also found that such workers were offered little training and were vulnerable to employers' demands to change working hours which could come into conflict with childcare and other domestic responsibilities.

It was found that while many female part-timers valued their working arrangements because it fitted commitments at home, employers introduced flexibility for commercial rather than equal opportunities reasons.

Summarising the findings of three reports, the commission conceded that equal opportunities policies were useful, but had yielded a limited impact. The problem was that pay and conditions were outside the scope of such policies.

Kamlesh Bahl, the commission chairwoman, said flexible working ought to be good news for women trying to combine

work and family duties, but she recognised it also had its downside. She said the commission was talking to employers and unions to seek out examples of good practice.

Ms Bahl fought shy of calling for fresh legislation to protect part-timers, arguing that the commission was still investigating the issue.

The commission had a reputation for challenging existing laws, but it was also important to promote the practices of good employers wherever they were found. Evidence showed that employers did not save money by paying low wages and suffering a high labour turnover as a consequence.

She warned that full-time permanent employment was disappearing. "Flexibility is here to stay." Research sponsored by the commission confirmed that the bulk of employees undertaking "flexible" jobs were women. Two out of five women of working age were in part-time jobs, compared with less than one in 10 men.

While flexible working had improved the opportunities for women to work, the recent restructuring of organisations by "downsizing" or by "delaying" had meant that more work was being done by fewer staff.

It had been found that although the number of women in new management jobs had increased, the status of the posts had not been as high as those held previously by men.

The studies found that black women were "invisible", especially in supervisory and management jobs.

### DAILY POEM

**Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Epistle to Mr Pope**

By Michael Glover

You ask me, Mr Pope,  
What it is exactly that I feel now, being dead,  
And lodged here in these Elysian Fields.  
With the Black Sea beneath me,  
And the fountains playing about my heels.  
I feel serene, soft and beyond the call  
Of the world's manifold impertinences – yes, that above all –  
No longer wishing to arbitrate  
Between the red shift and the gold,  
Or become impassioned over  
Those interminable games of piquet of old.  
I wish you well with your labours  
Down there in those filthy London streets.  
And, did I not feel its opposite,  
I might even say to you: let us meet...

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, daughter of the Duke of Kingston, was one of the cleverest women of the 18th century. Letter-writer extraordinaire (her Turkish Letters, written while her husband was ambassador to Constantinople, were admired throughout Europe), a romantic who eloped with her first husband and took young lovers into old age, and one of the first Englishwomen to make an art-form of living abroad, she lived with individuality and passion throughout her life. The passion included a long friendship with the poet and satirist Alexander Pope which ruptured violently and publicly when they were in middle-age. Mutual mud-slinging continued to the grave.

This poem appears in Michael Glover's second collection *Impossible Horizons*, published by Sinclair-Stevenson at £7.99.

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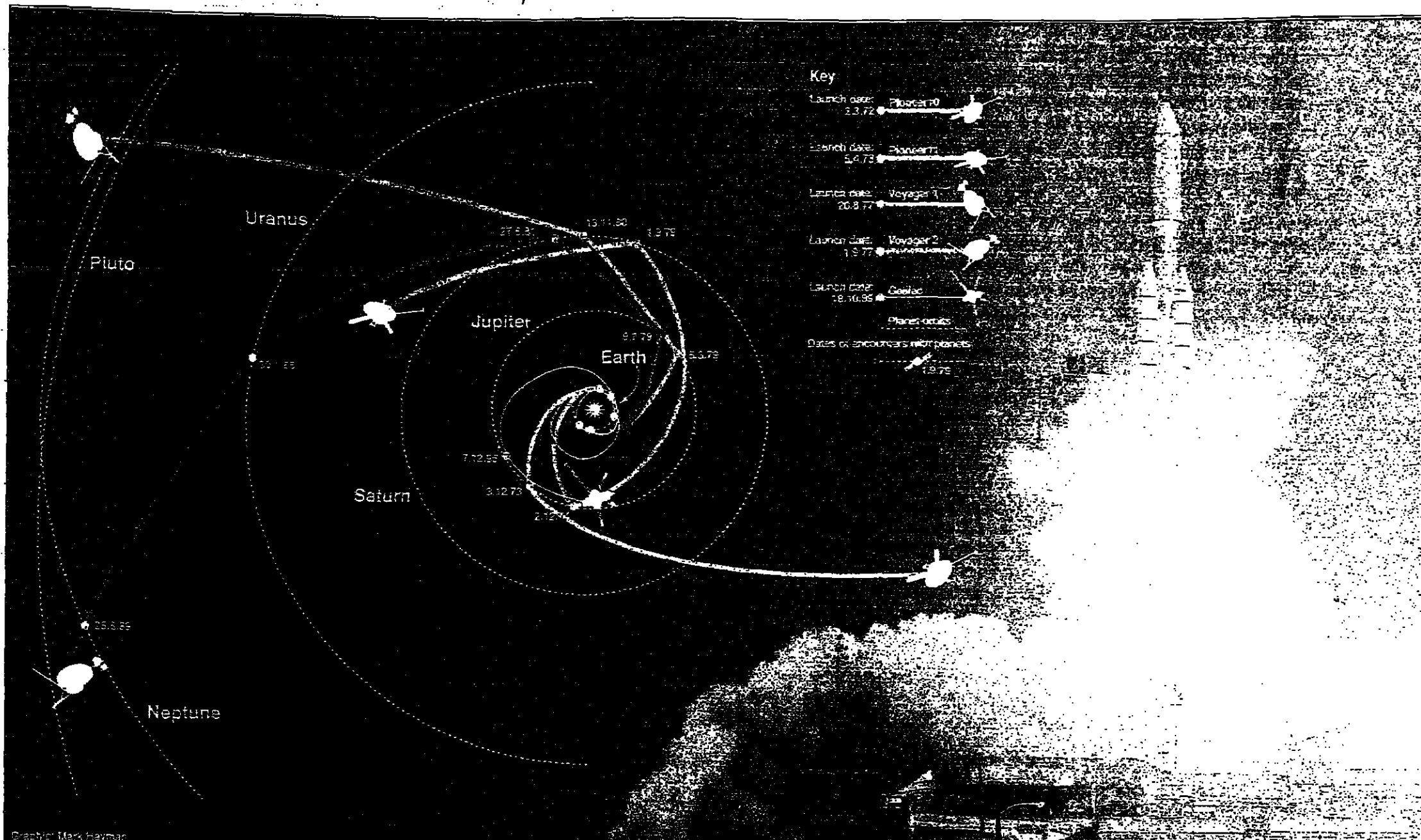
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# Galileo boldly goes to the limit of science



# MoD rapped over official's fraud

**CHRIS BLACKHURST**  
Westminster Correspondent

Ministry of Defence officials were hauled over the coals by a powerful committee of MPs yesterday for lapses that led to one of the biggest ever frauds in Whitehall.

The Commons Public Accounts Committee said the case of Gordon Foxley, the former head of ammunition procurement at the MoD, jailed for taking £1.3m, and probably much more, in bribes from three foreign defence manufacturers anxious to secure orders, was "one of the worst cases of corruption" it had examined.

Mr Foxley had several houses, both in Britain and abroad, and luxury cars, yet the MoD failed to spot anything amiss. "We are concerned that the Department's vetting arrangements failed to identify the lavish nature of Gordon Foxley's lifestyle," the committee said.

As a priority, it recommended the Government should introduce the same vetting arrangements for officials in a position to benefit from fraud as already applied to those who could pose a threat to national security.

Procurement staff had been in their jobs for a long period, said MPs, which "can increase the risk of fraud". Postings of five years, or even less, should be the norm. Where that was impossible, management checks should be strengthened.

The Foxley affair is still being investigated by MoD police. The full extent of his corruption is still not known – something MPs found hard to stomach. They urged the MoD to redouble its efforts to identify all the bribes he received – the police think he received far more than £1.3m – and to gain access to his Swiss bank accounts.

MoD claims that total fraud of £22m in the last decade was small, in the context of a total defence budget of £23bn, failed to impress the all-party group of MPs. "We are concerned that in absolute terms very large amounts are involved."

## The final frontier: Nasa's latest space probe is leading the way to a new understanding of our Solar System

**TOM WILKIE**  
Science Editor

For six years, the Galileo space mission to Jupiter has been totally alone in the void of space. Now, at the end of its 2.3-billion-mile odyssey, it has company—in the form of the solar system's largest planet, its faint rings, and its 16 known moons.

The space probe's extraordinary travels involved interplanetary snooker, with Galileo looping round Venus once, then heading back to Earth twice to gain enough gravitational en-

ergy to carry it across the 360 million miles between the earth's orbit and that of Jupiter. It has twice come close to asteroids, the tiny planetoids which tend to lie between the orbit of Mars and Jupiter.

But although it is the first man-made probe to examine Jupiter in detail, Galileo is not the first to fly past the planet. The Voyager and Pioneer missions have been to the outer planets before. And, bizarrely, a mission to explore the Sun included a detour to Jupiter.

While scientists await the

data from Galileo's six-year-long wanderings – much of it concerned with the Jovian "weather" – attention has switched, within the past month, from the largest planet to the weather on the largest object in the entire solar system, the Sun itself. The craft sent to probe the Sun have had, like Galileo, to travel bizarre and wonderful paths to reach their destinations.

On 2 December, the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (Soho) took off aboard an Atlas rocket from the Kennedy Space Centre. After a four-

month journey covering 1.5 million kilometres, this European Space Agency satellite will take up a unique orbit – not around a planet or the Sun directly – but around the “Lagrangian point” the spot where the gravitational pull of Earth and that of the Sun balance each other out. From this vantage point, it will look at the restless solar surface and listen for internal “sun-quakes”.

Soho will be followed in May 1996 by Cluster, a quartet of little satellites which, in orbit around Earth, will also be ex-

aming the effects of the Sun as the solar wind – the continuous stream of ionised gas emitted by the Sun – hits Earth's magnetic field.

Perhaps the strangest path of all is that taken by the ESA probe, known as Ulysses, which was launched from the shuttle *Discovery* on 6 October 1990. In order to look at the Sun, it was sent away from the Sun, towards Jupiter. Ulysses sped out to a rendezvous with the planet two years later and used the planet's gravity to shoot up out of the flat disc in

which all planets orbit the Sun.

But the Voyager and Pioneer spacecraft have had the longest journeys and are now the most distant man-made objects in the universe. Launched on 2 March 1972, Pioneer 10 was the first of the Jupiter missions. Pioneer 11 followed a year later. The two Voyagers were sent up within a couple of days of each other in 1977. By the late 1970s, the outermost planets of the Solar System were lined up in a curve, so that spacecraft could visit them one after another. Voyager 1 passed Jupiter in March

1979 and Saturn in 1980. Voyager 2 visited Jupiter in July 1979, Saturn in 1981, Uranus in 1986, and Neptune in 1989.

They are all now leaving the bounds of the Solar System and passing from interplanetary to interstellar space. They may yet yield one final piece of scientific information.

Some scientists believe there might be a 10th planet beyond the orbit of Pluto. It may reveal its gravitational pull by deflecting the trajectories of these distant craft from what is expected. But after that, nothing.

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## politics

Monetary union: Prime Minister says nothing can be ruled out

## Major keen to retain an option on EMU

DONALD MACINTYRE  
Political Editor

John Major yesterday reaffirmed his intention not to rule out British membership of EMU in the next Parliament despite strong pressure from Tory right-wingers to do so.

Although there are mounting doubts among senior British politicians in both the main parties about the likelihood of the 1999 timetable for a single currency being met, the Prime Minister said in the Commons it was "still" Government policy not to rule out British membership in the next Parliament.

The Prime Minister's declaration, in exchanges with Tony Blair, the Labour leader, followed his remarks in an interview with the *Independent* last month that he did not want to "surrender" his influence in negotiations in Europe on the consequences of EMU for countries outside as well as inside a single currency.

The prospect of a White Paper, setting out Britain's negotiating position for the 1996 Inter-Governmental Conference on the EU's future further increased yesterday when Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, told the Commons that ministers were now actively considering whether to publish one early next year.

Mr Major's remarks came a week ahead of the Madrid summit, at which Mr Major is expected to press his case that the economic results for countries outside EMU - including the possibility of competitive devaluations - have not been sufficiently thought through.

It also comes on the eve of a fresh campaign by John Redwood, the former Welsh Secretary and Mr Major's leadership challenger in the summer, to persuade the Gov-

ernment to make a further gesture towards the Euro-sceptic right, by explicitly pledging that a Tory government would not join a single currency in the next Parliament.

Mr Major has frequently cast doubt on the likelihood of a single currency before the end of the century. On the Labour side both Mr Blair, and in a BBC Radio interview yesterday, Robin Cook, his foreign affairs spokesman, have also suggested the 1999 timetable could well slip. Mr Cook suggested on the *Today* programme that delay might well be necessary in order to meet the widened economic convergence criteria which a Labour government would be seeking.

Although some ministers on the right believe that further discussions on the subject will have to take place within the Cabinet - and that the Prime Minister could still in the end make such a pledge - Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, is thought to be strongly opposed to such a move. Mr Major is said at present to accept the argument that it would lessen British influence over an issue which is of fundamental importance, even if the UK stays out of EMU.

After saying that Mr Major had made a "very important statement" by not ruling out membership, Mr Blair pressed the Prime Minister to say whether that was the "position of the whole of your Government, including the Euro-sceptic members of the Cabinet?" Mr Major replied: "Of course it is the position of the whole Government."

John Stevens, Tory MEP for Thames Valley, said in London yesterday said yesterday "monetary union is the test of whether Europe is serious about being competitive."



Lethal weapon: Victoria Moule, who is recovering from being seriously injured in a collision involving a vehicle fitted with bull bars, in central London yesterday at the launch of a Labour Party campaign to ban what it describes as a 'dangerous fashion accessory' Photograph: Geraint Lewis

## Heath defies party's Euro-sceptics

Sir Edward Heath yesterday swanned the Prime Minister that the task of negotiating for Britain would be made "impossible" if the Government bowed to the Euro-sceptics and issued a White Paper on Europe.

Reinforcing the belief that the Tory sceptics are now the tail that wags the Government dog, within hours of Sir Teddy Taylor commending the idea of a White Paper on the *Today* programme, John Major told the Commons he was considering publishing one.

The document would set out Britain's position on the various issues to come before next year's Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) on the future of the European Union.

But in a trenchant speech in which he also called for speedy

creation of a single currency, Sir Edward appealed to the Prime Minister "under no circumstances" to make a statement on the British position. "I have had many, many years of international negotiations and five years of negotiating in Europe. It is impossible for any prime minister to lay down before hand what he is going to do."

Sir Edward said there was a long tradition, "broken in recent years", of ministers negotiating what they thought was an acceptable deal and then bringing it back for MPs' approval. "If they are not approved, that's the end of the government."

Sir Edward backed the social chapter and the minimum wage - the effect of both had been "grossly exaggerated" - and membership of a European single currency.

### Inside Parliament

Stephen Goodwin

Heckled by sceptics who would like a Government commitment not to join at all, he said that ever since its creation the community had moved forward in considerable leaps, and it would do so on the currency. "The sooner this is done the better."

Sir Edward's strictures were greeted with wooden expressions by Foreign Office ministers. Mr Rifkind looked at his shoes and stroked his trousers

as Sir Edward deplored the readiness to be "isolated" about which the Secretary of State had boasted.

"We are kidding ourselves if we say they all want to do what we're doing. It couldn't be further from the truth. They are saying just how lucky they are to be saved from it."

Within the Tory party, however, it is Sir Edward who is looking increasingly isolated. He did at least have the support of Edwina Currie, chairman of the Conservative Group for Europe. "It isn't true that all Conservatives are anti-Europe, very far from it," she insisted.

With the IGC agenda due for discussion at the Madrid summit next week, Mr Rifkind said Britain would welcome a conference that strengthened practical co-operation where it was

necessary and showed "a renewed determination that the EU should stay out of areas where it isn't necessary".

He said the next few years would be as important as any in Europe's history though he predicted that negotiations over the entry of the first central and eastern European countries could take five or six years.

On the vexed business of a single currency, Mr Rifkind said it was clear that if monetary union was to go ahead on 1 January 1999, only a minority of states would be ready. The implications of this had yet to be examined.

"Therefore there is a crucial need for work to begin now, not in 1997 or 1998, as to what will be the implications for the relationship between the 'ins' and the 'outs' in such a situation."

## Labour 'to make football a sport for all'

JOHN RENTOUL  
Political Correspondent

Labour lined up an array of high-powered endorsements for its Football Charter yesterday, to back the party's claim to speak for "the national game". Jimmy Hill, the television pundit and chairman of Fulham FC, applauded Labour's plans to crack down on British football hooligans abroad and to reform the bodies which run the sport. "To achieve even half of its good intentions in office would be miraculous," he said. He singled out for particular welcome "the concern about uncivilised behaviour both on and off the field, the encouragement for the Football Association to streamline its organisation and for a wider spread of wealth throughout the entire game".

Most of the leading figures in the sport came to hear Jack Cunningham, Labour's national heritage spokesman, launch the party's charter at a Westminster news conference. The plans were welcomed by David Davies, of the FA, Rick Parry, of the Premier League, David Dent, of the Football League, representatives of the two main supporters' organisations and the Professional Footballers' Association.

Mr Cunningham said Labour would attempt to amend the forthcoming Broadcasting Bill to ensure that "major sporting events", including the FA Cup Final, would be protected for viewing by all.

Mr Cunningham said: "We want football genuinely to be a 'sport for all'. One of our first priorities on taking office would be to establish a task force which would report within one year."

The charter proposes a number of legal changes to clamp down on violent or racist supporters, including increasing the punishments for failing to comply with restriction orders, designed to keep persistent offenders out of football grounds.

A spokesman for the Department of National Heritage said the Government had taken "a leading role in tackling football hooliganism."

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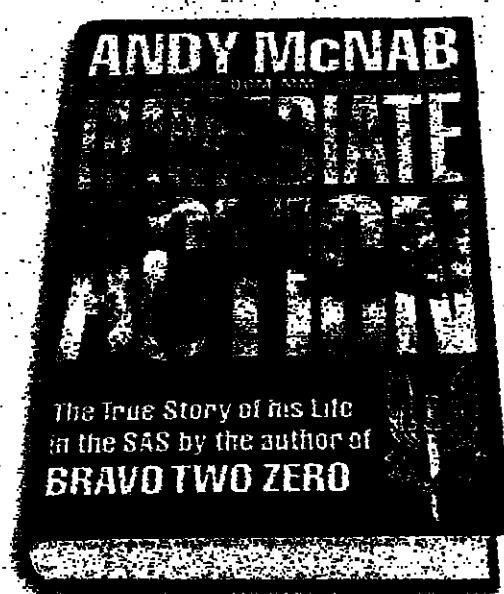
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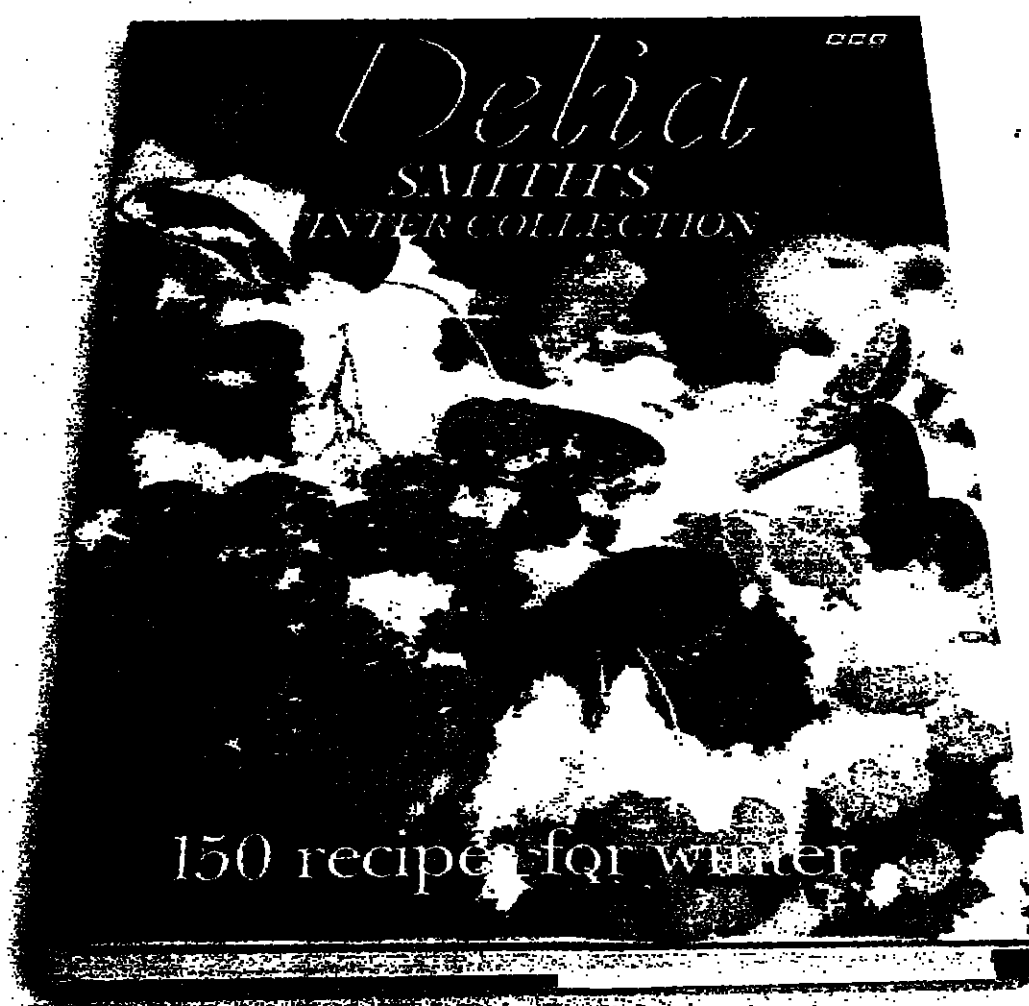
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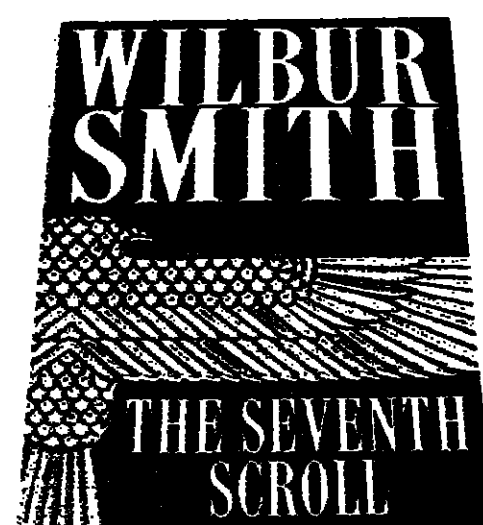
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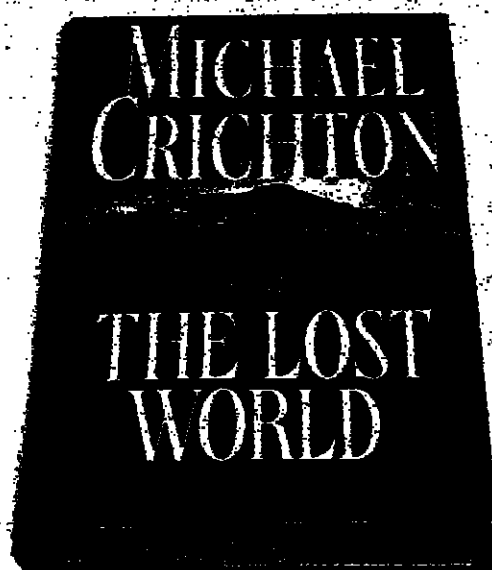
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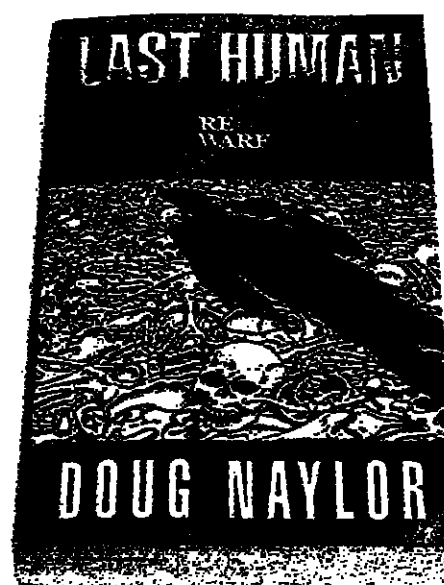
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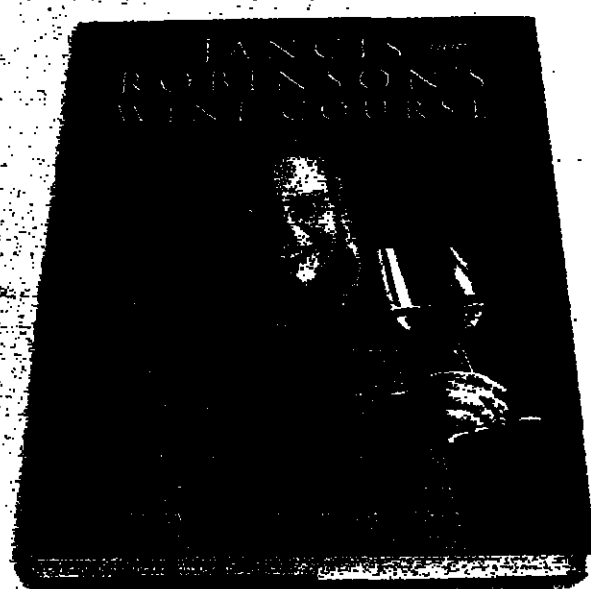
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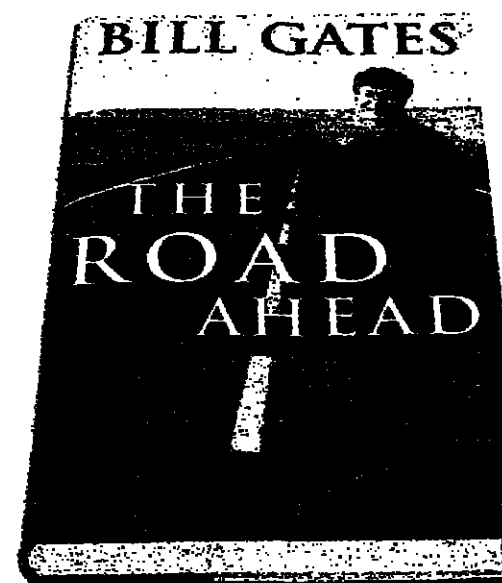
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## international

## Kohl warns France to toe EMU line

IMRE KARACS  
Baden-Baden

President Jacques Chirac and most of the French government fled from the chaos of Paris yesterday in search of neighbourly reassurance in the cosy German spa town of Baden-Baden. What they got, instead, was a stern call from the Germans not to veer from the narrow path of monetary rigour that has so inflamed passions on the other side of the Rhine.

The French and German leaders also launched a joint initiative on EU reform, which will irritate the British government, but falls far short of past Franco-German Euro-federal rhetoric. Among other things, Paris and Bonn agree that majority voting by EU governments should be extended to new areas – something adamantly opposed by Britain.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl warmed up for the 66th Franco-German summit meeting with an uncompromising speech to the Bundestag, urging “sustained effort” from countries wishing to enter European monetary union in 1999. For France, that means pursuing welfare cuts that have brought the unions into the streets, paralysing the country for the 14th day in succession.

To qualify for monetary union by the set date, France needs to cut its budget deficit down to 3 per cent of gross domestic product, a task which had seemed almost impossible even before the outbreak of hostili-

ties between the government and the workers. Now the German public, the opposition and even senior figures in the Bonn government seem convinced that President Chirac will not be able to pull it off.

The French delegation were welcomed to Baden-Baden with headlines such as “1999 is dead” in the local paper, the *Badisches Tagblatt*. That was the assessment of Dieter Spöri, the deputy prime minister of the region of Baden-Württemberg. Mr Spöri and leading opposition figures in Bonn are calling for a postponement of the abolition of the Deutschmark until at least 2003, by which time they estimate that other countries in Europe should be able to put their budgets in order. But Mr Kohl sticks doggedly to the date in the belief that a delay could scupper the project and deal a fatal blow to the process of European integration.

The difficulties facing monetary union kept to the top of yesterday's agenda, turning a joint Franco-German initiative on the future of Europe into something of a side-show.

Chancellor Kohl and President Chirac agreed the text of a joint letter pushing Franco-German ideas for the negotiations on the reform of EU institutions (Maastricht II) due to start next year. Although much in the letter will irritate London, it fell considerably short of the kind of federalist ideas which Paris, and especially Bonn, had been expected to bring to the reform process.

The letter, containing four



Cheers: Helmut Kohl (left) and Jacques Chirac toasting the 66th Franco-German summit yesterday

Photograph: Wolfgang Rattay/Reuters

main points, is addressed to the Spanish Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzalez, who chairs the EU summit in Madrid next month.

The French and German leaders suggest:

- Efforts to bring both the European parliament and nation-

al parliaments more fully into the process of “European integration.” This vague formulation falls short of previous German calls for greater powers for the European Parliament.

- That the common European

security and foreign policy should be reinforced by establishing from 1998 clearer links between the EU and the Western European Union, effectively the European arm of Nato. This goes directly against UK policy, as articulated by Michael Por-

tillo, the Secretary of State for Defence.

- Greater efforts to combat crime, drugs, terrorism and illegal immigration at European level. Although far from specific, the letter implies a weakening of the French resistance to the

creation of, in effect, a European FBI.

- The extension of majority voting in the European Council of Ministers into new, unspecified areas. This is opposed by Britain.

News Analysis, page 21

## IN BRIEF

## Michael Jackson ‘stable’ in hospital

New York – Michael Jackson was in a stable condition in a New York hospital yesterday after collapsing during a rehearsal for a cable television concert. The 37-year-old pop singer fainted on Wednesday at the Beacon Theatre, Manhattan. He was rushed to the Beth Israel North Hospital with “dangerously low” blood pressure and dehydration, officials said.

Reuters

## Hope fades for 100

Moscow – Hope faded yesterday for almost 100 people missing after their airliner crashed in the Russian Far East. “I cannot imagine that the passengers or crew had any chance,” the Moscow-based Russian air traffic control chief Dmitry Polkanov said. “According to our information from Khabarovsk, I can confirm that the plane has crashed.” An official at Khabarovsk airport, seven time zones and 9,000km (5,600 miles) east of Moscow, said rescuers had suspended their search for the Tupolev Tu-154 as darkness fell.

Reuters

## Chun refuses food

Seoul – Chun Doo Hwan, the former president of South Korea, went without food for a fifth day yesterday, apparently in protest at his imprisonment on suspicion of mutiny, writes Richard Lloyd Parry. Apart from milk and barley tea, Mr Chun has refused all nourishment since Sunday, when he was driven to the Anyang Detention Centre in Seoul to be questioned about his role in a 1979 military coup, and a massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators the following year.

## Blow for Gingrich

Washington – The US House of Representatives ethics committee approved an outside counsel to investigate a college course taught by the Speaker, Newt Gingrich, and found he violated standards of conduct in three instances. The vote was 10-0. The decision ensures a protracted investigation extending well into the 1996 election year.

AP

## East Timor protest

Jakarta – More than 100 East Timorese stormed the Dutch and Russian embassies yesterday, demanding a petition for independence be delivered to a UN representative. The protesters mark the 20th anniversary of Indonesia's invasion of the Portuguese colony.

AP

## Juppé appoints mediator to placate striking railmen

MARY DEJEVSKY  
Paris

The French Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, yesterday announced the appointment of a mediator for the national railway company, SNCF, in the hope of placating railwaymen worried about a restructuring plan and ending the two-week strike that has paralysed rail transport in France.

The appointment of Jean Matteoli, a lawyer who chairs the Economic and Social Council, a consultative body, appeared to be the latest attempt by the government to meet what it sees as peripheral concerns among different groups of

strikers, while keeping its contested welfare reforms intact.

The railwaymen have been at the forefront of national protests against welfare reform. But their determination has been reinforced by objections to a new restructuring plan, designed to reduce SNCF's big operating losses, that could entail cuts in jobs, funding and services.

Mr Juppé had been scheduled to accompany President Jacques Chirac to the Franco-German summit in Baden-Baden yesterday, but remained in Paris in view of the continuing social and industrial unrest. Teachers and junior civil servants joined the strikes for the

first time yesterday, and most schools were closed. Domestic and foreign flights experienced serious disruption as airline staff went on strike; workers blocked the entrance to the main passenger terminal at Charles de Gaulle airport, and police used tear gas at the other main Paris airport, Orly, to disperse protesters occupying the runways.

Railwaymen, for their part, blocked the track at the Gare du Nord in Paris for only the second time since their strike began, reducing the number of Eurostar train departures to London. This action, on the same day as the first airline strike, seemed designed to cut

France off completely: the Eurostar and the Calais-Dover shuttle have been the only trains working in any part of France since the rail strike started.

The two unions in the vanguard of the recent protests – the FO and the CGT – had also called for another day of national protest, the second this week, in the hope of pressing home the huge turnouts achieved in Tuesday's demonstrations. The response, however, was mixed, with the initiative appearing to pass from Paris to the provinces.

Up to 50,000 people marched through the streets of Marseilles and Toulouse, and the police – who tend to err on the side

of caution – gave a figure of 30,000 for Bordeaux, the city where Mr Juppé is mayor. These same cities were also without all forms of public transport. In Paris, however, where public transport has been non-existent for more than a week, the turnout was about half that of Tuesday's more than 50,000 marchers, even with the participation of large numbers of schoolchildren.

Nor has the strike spread into the private sector, as the unions have been hoping. The vast majority of those on strike and demonstrating yesterday were still from the public sector.

Despite this, the mood on the streets – even in Paris, where the

lack of public transport has created particular problems for commuters and businesses – still seems tolerant. A remarkable sense of solidarity prevails, which seems only to increase from day to day, along with a heroic determination among those still working to get there at almost any cost to their purse and their dignity. The far from young can be seen on antique rollerskates, and eminently respectable ladies in their 50s and 60s hold up placards with names of suburbs on them, hitching lifts as though they were students.

In the seemingly endless traffic jams, many cars are carrying four or five people. There are stories of concierges “organising” occupants of their blocks into car pools, and of “official” army and government cars stopping for hitchhikers, even of the occasional bus taking a diversion to deliver a passenger to his or her door.

For business, though, the news is bad. Tourists are few and far between. Visiting artists and musicians are cancelling appearances, and cinemas, theatres and restaurants are half-empty. Shopping habits have also changed. Staples are being bought and stored – just in case. But the difficulties of getting to work and buying basics are being blamed for the

downturn in sales of women's clothes and shoes.

AP

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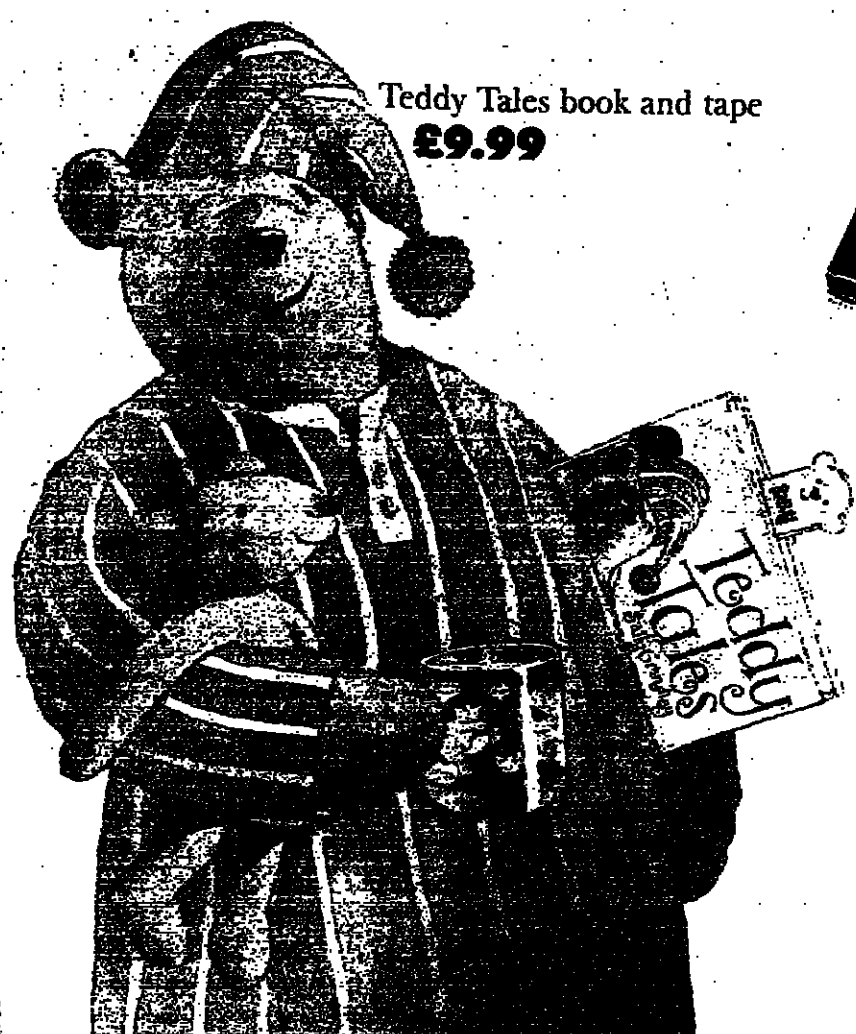
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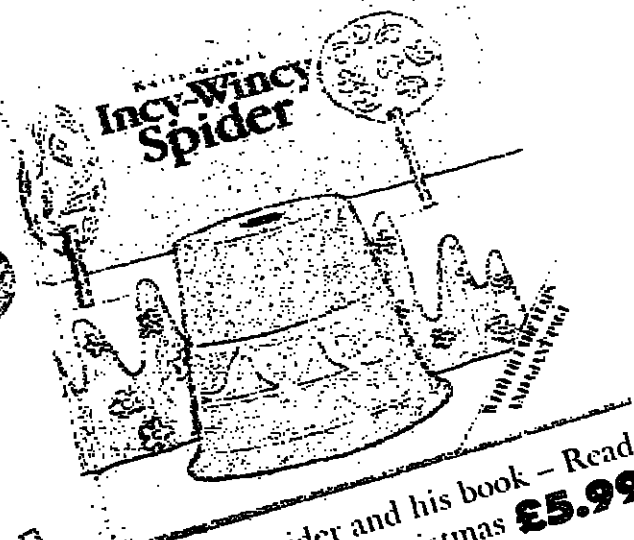
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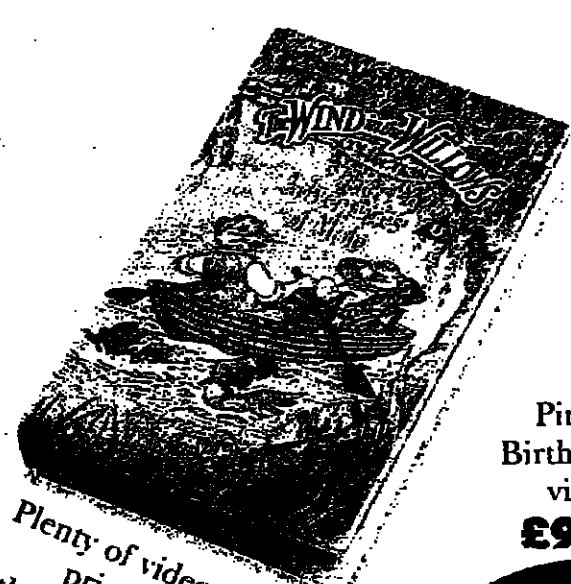
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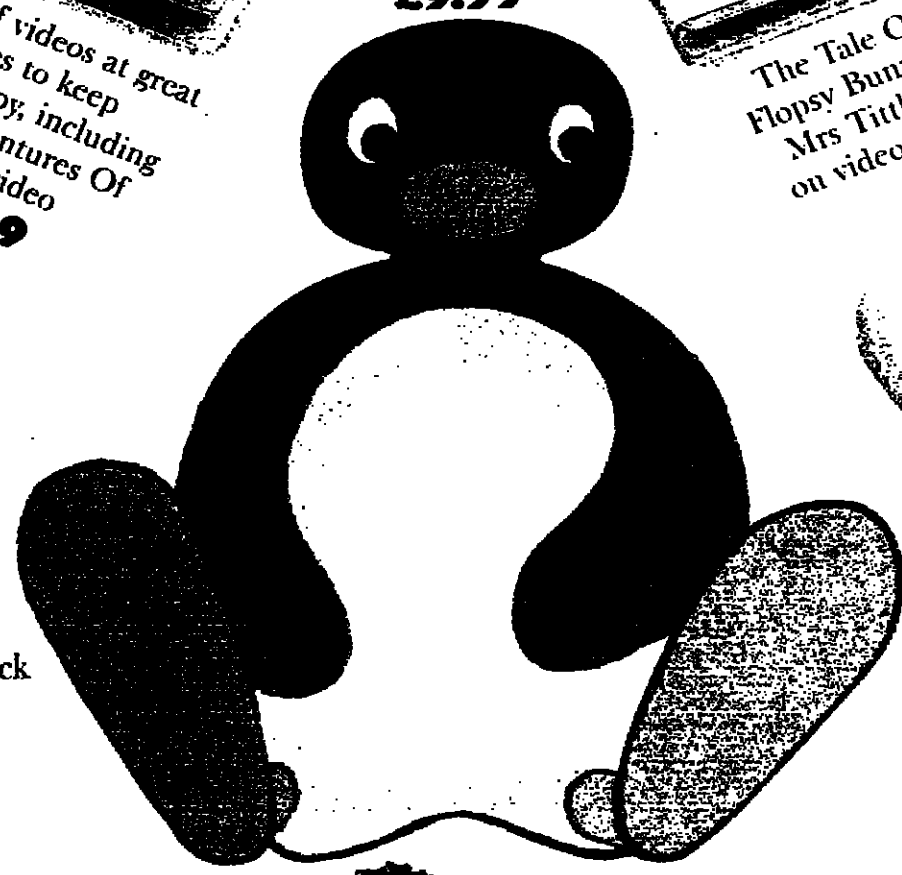


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## international



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**Bosnia accord: Focus shifts to London as ministers gather to determine strategy for implementing agreement**



Order of the boot: A militiaman tramples a US flag during a demonstration yesterday in a Serbian suburb of Sarajevo in protest against the peace plan which transfers control to the Muslim-led government. Photograph: AP

## Nations seek to shore up peace

**MICHAEL SHERIDAN**  
 Diplomatic Editor  
**ADRIAN BRIDGE**  
 Budapest

Foreign ministers will mount an informal effort to resolve the dispute between Serbia and Croatia over the region of eastern Slavonia at the Peace Implementation Conference on the former Yugoslavia, opening in London today.

The discussions are expected to take place in the margins of formal sessions on the military and civilian efforts to carry out the Dayton peace accords, which set out the terms for an end to the war in Bosnia.

European ministers are keen to use the opportunity also to defuse the issue of eastern Slavonia, a border area of Croatia occupied by separatist Serbs. Under the Dayton formula the region is to be ruled by an international authority for up to two years, after which time it will revert to Croatian sovereignty. But the process could be delayed by the absence of any agreement to protect the status of Serbs remaining in the area, and there are also other areas of disagreement.

"The eastern Slavonia ques-

tion could still set off a war between Serbia and Croatia unless it is resolved," said a Western diplomat, "and it is the kind of side issue that could disrupt the whole settlement in Bosnia".

The ministers will also be expected to agree on a new structure of military and civilian relations in the international effort in Bosnia, hoping to avoid the bureaucratic conflicts which bedevilled the failed United Nations mission.

Although discussions on military arrangements are taking place at Nato in Brussels, the London conference is certain to provide a forum for political tensions to surface, particularly between France and the US.

The French government, whose troops will man the Sarajevo sector, has already expressed concern over the provision in the Dayton accords for the Muslim-led government to take over Serb suburbs of the capital. While partly fed by worries over the fate of two French airmen presumed to be in Serb hands, the issue could still cause sharp disagreement among the Western allies.

The foreign ministers are likely to agree on the appointment of the European Union

negotiator, Carl Bildt, as the first High Representative to co-ordinate civilian relief, reconstruction, the protection of human rights and the holding of elections.

The 53-nation Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) met yesterday in Budapest to discuss its mandate to supervise the preparation and conduct of elections for the presidency and legislature of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The polls are to be held within six to nine months of the formal signature of peace agreement in Paris on 14 December.

"We have never taken on anything like this before," said a Western delegate. "Success would greatly enhance the OSCE's credibility. But if we fail it could all be called into question." Another said: "The Clinton administration has put itself on the line with this peace plan. They do not want it to be an empty piece of paper - particularly if US troops are going to be getting involved."

The OSCE plans to establish offices throughout the Muslim-Croat and Serb areas of Bosnia. A \$24.5m budget has been earmarked, and it will employ 200-300 monitoring experts.

## UN looks on as Croats burn and loot homes

Sarajevo (Reuters) — The United Nations yesterday defended its failure to intervene in parts of Bosnia where Croat forces are systematically burning and looting towns, and said it did not think Nato troops, in similar circumstances, would get involved.

British forces currently deployed in these areas as UN peace-keepers will remain on the ground for Nato when it deploys later this month.

"If you look at our mandate, our interpretation is we were not sent here to stop civil populations burning down their own houses," said Lieutenant-Colonel Chris Vernon, the UN spokesman.

About 60,000 Nato combat troops are scheduled to be deployed in Bosnia to implement a peace plan initiated in Dayton, Ohio, last month and due to be signed in Paris next Thursday. Nato will bring bigger guns, better armour and artillery and more robust rules of engagement, mostly for defensive purposes.

With the UN packing up and Nato just arriving, Bosnia has been left to its own devices — with predictable consequences. The Croats have burned down 40 per cent of Mrkonjic Grad and Sipovo, towns scheduled to revert to Serb control after the peace plan is signed. The arson and looting is being carried out by uniformed soldiers, much of it under the eyes of British troops whom the UN has ordered to observe but not to interfere.

Bosnian Serb leaders, some of them indicted war criminals supposed to have stepped down under the Dayton deal, are rejecting the agreement as it calls for them to hand Sarajevo's northern and western suburbs to government control.

Serb troops are also blocking UN-escorted civilian convoys to Gorazde, in defiance of a pledge made in October in exchange for a halt to Nato air strikes. And Serbs are continuing to drive Muslims from their homes — 60 families this week alone in the Banja Luka region — despite the fact that the Dayton accord "guarantees" the rights of minorities to stay in their property.

"Nato will be in an invidious position no matter what it does," said a relief worker. "If it lets the locals take things into their own hands, headline Croats and Serbs will scuttle the Dayton agreement. If Nato tries to become an occupying force, which may be what is necessary to make the deal work, it could well get sucked into the quagmire it vowed to avoid."

Washington (AP) — Neely half the House of Representatives signed a letter to President Bill Clinton opposing the deployment of US troops to Bosnia, even as he formally notified Congress yesterday that the first Americans had landed. In their one-sentence letter, 184 members — 171 Republicans and 13 Democrats — wrote: "We urge you not to send ground troops to Bosnia."

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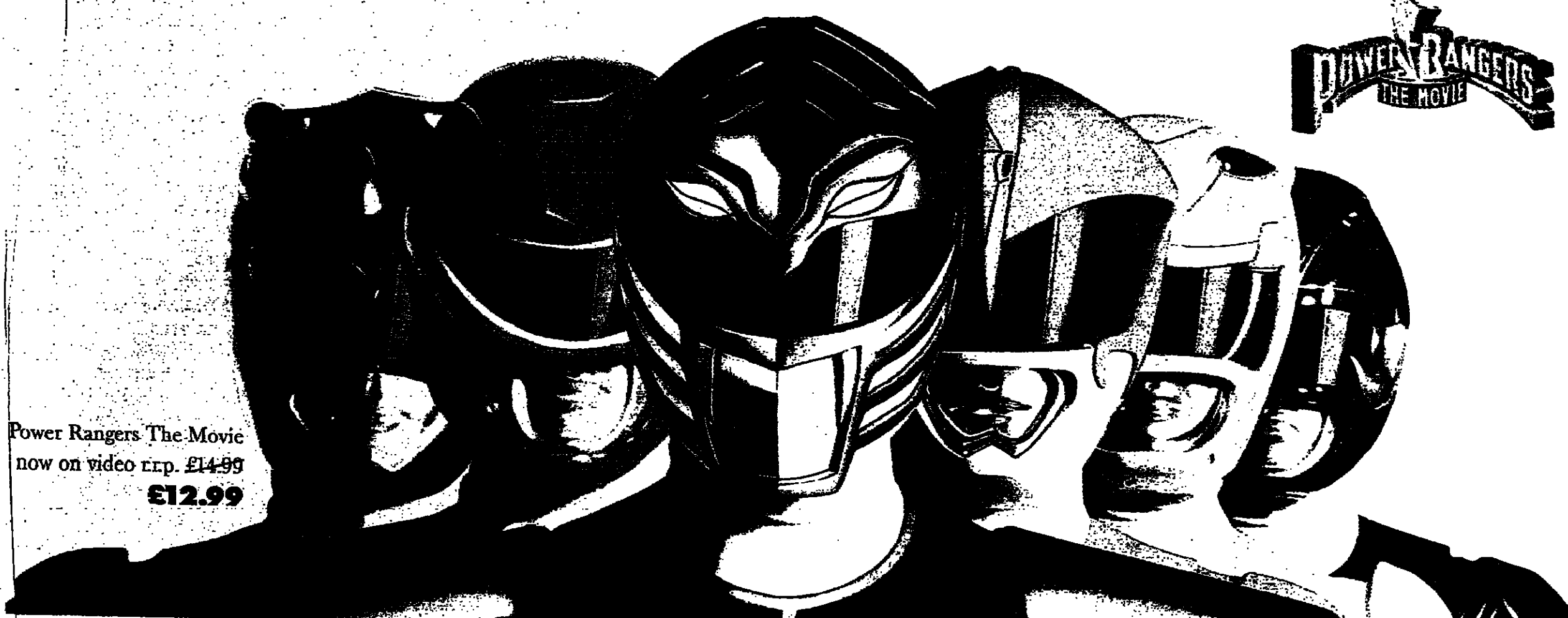


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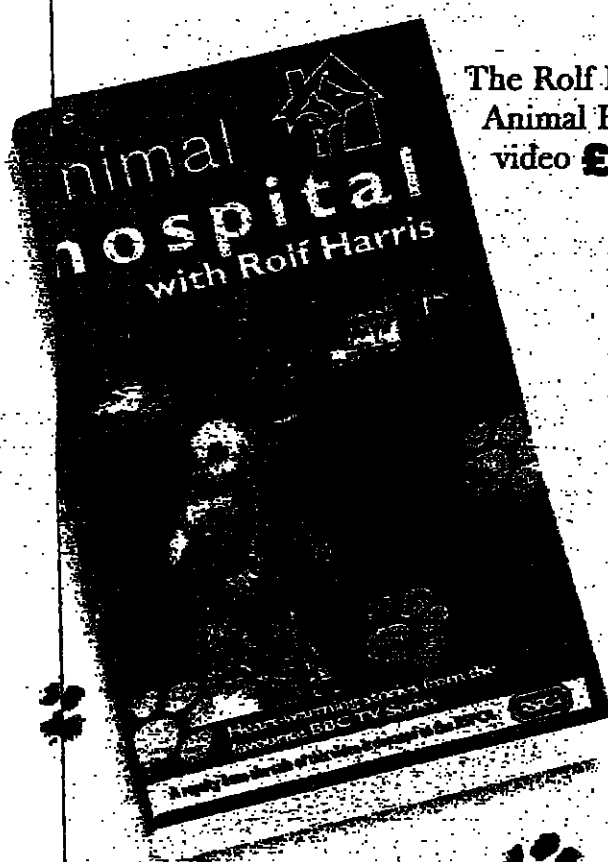
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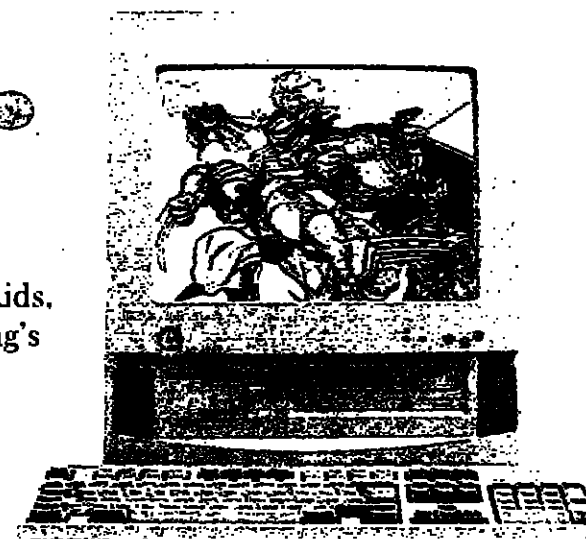
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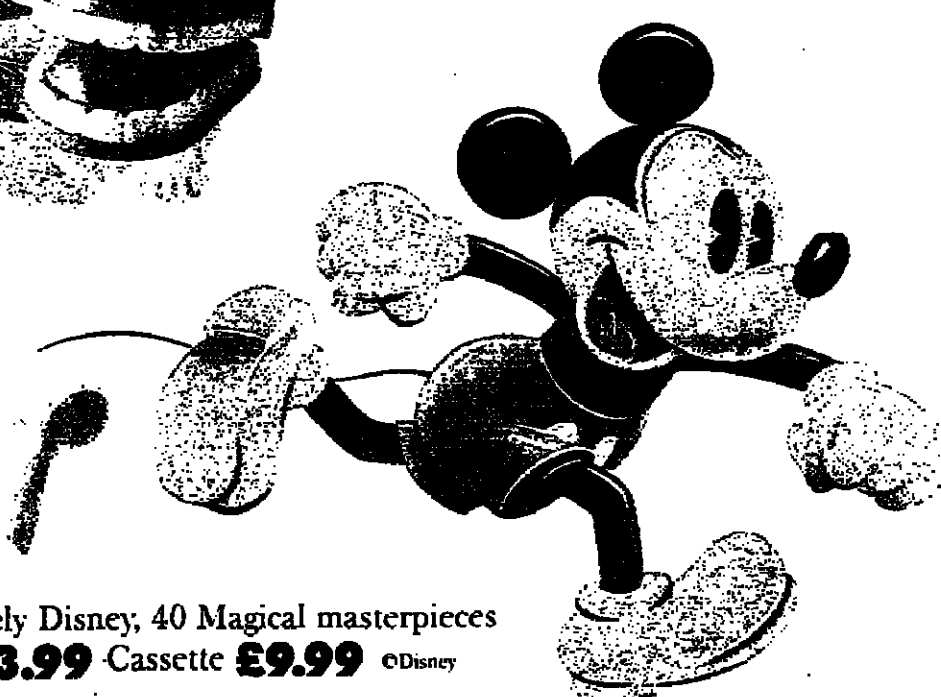


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## international

Russian elections: Hit hard by privatisation, the professional classes are wooed by a whizz-kid economist and a former PM

## Reformers face legacy of hate

HELEN WOMACK  
Moscow

Had Mikhail Gorbachev allowed the whizz-kid economist Grigory Yavlinsky to try out his ambitious plan to privatise the Soviet economy in 500 days, Mr Yavlinsky would hardly be the popular politician he is today. But the father of *perestroika* delayed introducing economic reform, passing the buck to Boris Yeltsin and his chosen young economist, Yegor Gaidar.

Mr Gaidar and his team plunged in - dubbed the "boys in pink pants" because, in their 30s, they were young to be in government - and took the colossal risk of freeing prices after decades of state control. That was back in January 1992, at the start of Russia's transformation to capitalism.

Naturally Mr Gaidar made mistakes, and got his hands dirty. Now he is a hate figure for many Russians, and his party, Russia's Democratic Choice-United Democrats (RDC-UD), will be lucky if it gains enough votes in parliamentary elections on Sunday week to pass the 5-per-cent threshold to enter the assembly.

During the painful reforms, Mr Yavlinsky sat on the sidelines, criticising and keeping an unsullied reputation. Now he is seen as one of the few politicians worth a vote by those electors who want to prevent a Communist landslide or the rise of ugly nationalists. His Yabloko party appears consistently in second place behind the Communist front-runner in the opinion polls. If it does indeed do well, Mr Yavlinsky, 43, will use his success at parliamentary level to propel himself into the race for president next June.

The parliamentary-election shock of two years ago was the victory of the extreme nationalist, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, and his misleadingly named Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR). Liberals in the Western sense of the word, including Mr Gaidar and Mr Yavlinsky, wrung their hands and vowed to unite against the threat of fascism.

But the two politicians, who are really very close in their world outlook, differing only on economic technicalities, have failed again to pool their efforts. There was talk of them entering an alliance earlier this year,

but a personality clash evidently wrecked the plan. Of course, Mr Gaidar needed Mr Yavlinsky more than Mr Yavlinsky needed Mr Gaidar.

It was not always so. In 1992, Mr Gaidar was Prime Minister while Mr Yavlinsky was out in the provinces, advising on local privatisation schemes. Under Mr Gaidar prices rocketed, but a market did begin to develop, and the shops, which had been catastrophically empty in the winter of 1991-92, filled up with goods.

The Soviet-era Russian parliament howled in protest at the social cost of the changes, and in December 1992 President Yeltsin was forced to drop his protégé and replace him with Viktor Chernomyrdin, the present Prime Minister. Mr Chernomyrdin, as leader of the "Our Home is Russia" movement, is now trying to persuade voters to persevere with reforms in order to reap the benefits.

But Mr Gaidar has withdrawn his support from the government, because of last December's military intervention in Chechnya. He now works closely with the respected human rights campaigner,

Sergei Kovalyov, and if his party, with the uninspiring slogan "Be rational, say da to Gaidar", wins any votes, it is likely to be because of his strong stance over Chechnya.

Mr Yavlinsky, more charismatic than the pudgy-faced Mr Gaidar, also opposes the war in Chechnya, but his main argu-

ment with the government is over economic policy. Mr Chernomyrdin has paid special attention to the energy sector, but Mr Yavlinsky believes the emphasis should be on small businesses, so that Russia develops a healthy middle class.

While other parties are spending lavishly on television

advertising campaigns, Yabloko found some free publicity in the autumn when election bureaucrats disqualified it on a technicality. The Supreme Court re-instated Yabloko, but not before Mr Yavlinsky had achieved martyr status.

The intelligentsia is the "constituency" being wooed by

Yabloko, which means apple in Russian and also combines letters from the surnames of the founding members, Mr Yavlinsky, Yuri Boldyrev, a corruption fighter, and Vladimir Lukin, a former ambassador to the US. Yabloko does indeed seem to attract professionals, such as teachers, doctors, scientists and

artists, who have suffered from the loss of state subsidies who resist nostalgic formalism or the crude sobors of the nationalists.

They have been hurt, but have not come to lose hope in its efficacy, yet Mr Yavlinsky's untied will turn out to be less so.

Separate ways: The ex-Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar (left) and Grigory Yavlinsky differ only on economic technicalities as they run for parliament



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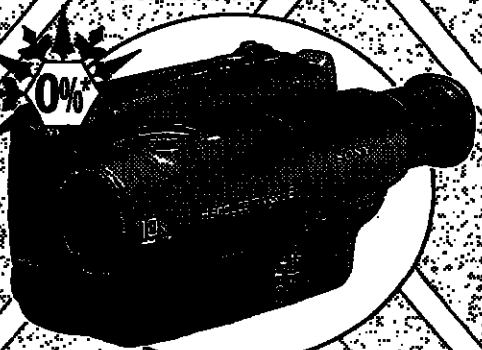
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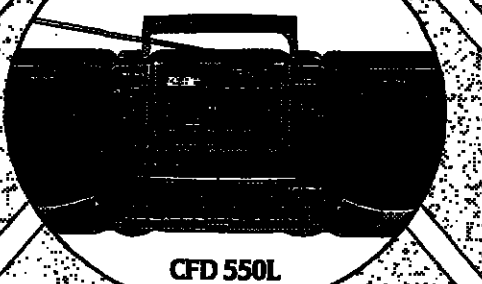


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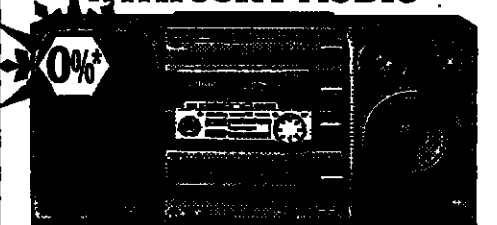
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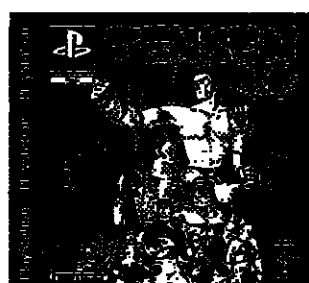
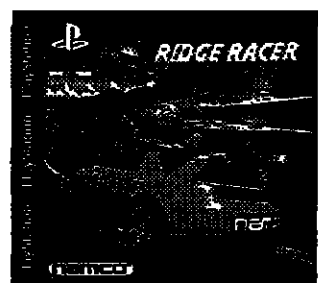
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## Vote Apple to keeo Communists at bay

Moscow - In the new capitalist Russia, where the ability to make fast money counts more than professional qualifications, Irina Glushenkova, a concert pianist, has found herself impoverished, writes Helen Womack.

Yet Ms Glushenkova is not nostalgic for Communism, which would have guaranteed her a living. On the contrary, she is considering how best to use her vote to make sure the Communists, favourites in the coming parliamentary elections, do not return to power.

Ms Glushenkova is a graduate of the once-prestigious Moscow Conservatory. The state gave her a free education at the highest level and, had the Soviet system of subsidising the arts continued, she could have expected a career as a performer. Instead, she went out into a world that does not value her skills. The bankrupt state can no longer support her, while most Russian businessmen have yet to mature to the point where they sponsor culture.

The 32-year-old pianist survives by teaching easy tunes to infants in a private school patronised by rich Russians. For this, she earns the equivalent of

£96 a month, which does not go far now that many go on at Western prices.

Ms Glushenkova lives with her mother and grandmother in a cramped flat in a workclass suburb of Moscow. The bitter about this, because the family had a spacious dacha house which the Communists confiscated.

This is one reason Ms Glushenkova will vote Communist. Another is, despite having gained little in material terms from reform, she has benefited from the freedom in Russia. "I don't want to go back to totalitarianism," she says, so she votes strategically in an attempt to block the Communists well as Russian nationalists.

Ms Glushenkova is flustered by the plethora of parties offering themselves, but moving towards a decision. Free marketeers who have already been in government are rejected, because of the price they have caused. But this another reformer who runs untried, and Ms Glushenkova will probably give a chance Grigory Yavlinsky and his Yabloko (Apple) grouping.

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# Aristide keeps US guessing over elections

JILL DAVIDSON  
Port-au-Prince

When the Haitian President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, announced the other day that he was getting married, he left his wife somewhat up in the air. He did not say when, nor even where. And no one was quite sure whether he is still officially Catholic priest and therefore ineligible to marry.

The media quickly ascertained that his fiancée was Mildred Trouillot, a 33-year-old Haitian-American lawyer who did work for him during his years of exile in the US. For his clerical status, he is down to have asked the Vatican to release him from his vows for the Salesian order.

Other ambiguities in his recent public comments have raised questions as to whether presidential elections will take place on Sunday week as scheduled, and whether he will hand over power as promised on 7 February next year. Under the constitution, he cannot run for consecutive terms and is not a candidate on 17 December.

But he has kept both Haiti and the Clinton administration guessing. He has not publicly endorsed his Lavalas (Avalanche) party's candidate, Rene Preval, and signs of an election campaign are minimal in Port-au-Prince.

Many of Mr Aristide's supporters are clamouring for him to complete the three years of his term he missed while exiled because of the 1991 coup. "We want Aristide for ever," say graffiti in Port-au-Prince. For President Bill Clinton, however, what has been billed as his

"greatest foreign policy success" - the 1994 intervention which overthrew the Haitian military rulers - hinges on Mr Aristide handing over power. That was what "Operation Uphold Democracy" was all about.

With US forces headed for Bosnia and an election year looming, Mr Clinton is particularly keen on rounding off his

last year. Diplomats believe he is using his overwhelming popular support and the veiled threat of cancelling the elections as bargaining chips to get what he wants from the US.

"They prefer to retain the [aid] money. We would like the international community to keep its word," he said. "We want to protect democracy by disarming the assassins. I have spent the past year feeding my people with words, keeping the people at peace. Now they are withholding the aid and as a result economic refugees are leaving the country." He was referring to a surge in the number of Haitian "boat people" headed for Florida. His domestic critics believe Mr Aristide himself has "turned on the tap of boat people" as another bargaining chip to free US aid.

Millions of dollars of American and other international aid has been delayed because Mr Aristide has been slow to implement a privatisation programme he promised in return for the US intervention. The documents to which he referred were taken by US troops from Haitian military headquarters and the offices of the Front, the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti, a paramilitary group which worked closely with the coup leaders and terrorised the population before the US intervention.

Mr Aristide believes the documents may reveal CIA activities against him before and during his term, and perhaps even in the 1991 coup.

The former Fraph leader Emmanuel "Toto" Constant, in jail in the US awaiting deportation to Haiti, said this week that he had been paid \$700 (\$450) a month by the CIA - a fortune in Haiti - for several years and that the agency had been grooming him "maybe to be a successor" to Mr Aristide. The CIA, he alleged, "had its own agenda" in Haiti, trying to undermine Mr Aristide even as Mr Clinton's White House was supporting him and trying to restore him to power.

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## Panchen Lama: Chinese tamper with mystic tradition to weaken exiled leader



Children's drama: Peking is enthroning its own Panchen Lama (left), while holding exiled Tibetan leadership's choice (right) under arrest

## Tibet in turmoil over ruin of ancient rituals

TIM MCGIRK  
New Delhi

Tibet is in turmoil over the fate of two six-year-old boys. One of them, Gyaltse Norbu, is to be enthroned today by Chinese authorities as the reincarnation of the spiritual leader, the Panchen Lama.

For that, the boy can expect a lifetime of ill-will focused on him by millions of Tibetans who see him as a Chinese stooge, chosen not because he radiates enlightenment but because his father, a security officer in Nagchu prefecture, was an obedient Communist.

The other boy, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima - whom Tibet's exiled god-king, the Dalai Lama, has declared to be the true reincarnation - may be doomed by the Chinese to an early death or imprisonment, according to Tibetan exiles. "Even the boy's existence is a danger for the Chinese," said one exile in India.

By tampering with the selection of the Panchen Lama, the

Chinese are attempting to smash an occult ritual that has persisted in Tibet for hundreds of years. Tibetan Buddhists believe in reincarnation, and that certain enlightened lamas can, after death, choose to be reborn and continue their teachings.

Since the 10th century, the Dalai Lamas have assisted with their supernatural powers in finding the reincarnated

Panchen Lama, and vice versa. Tibetans consider the Dalai Lama to be an emanation of Avalokitesvara, the Buddha of Compassion, while the Panchen Lama is revered only slightly less. The Dalai Lama has traditionally been based in Lhasa and the Panchen Lama in Shigatse, Tibet's second city, and their relationship has sometimes been muddled by politics and personal rivalries. After 1959, when the Dalai Lama fled to Dharamsala in India following a failed uprising while the Panchen Lama remained in Tibet, they could scarcely communicate at all.

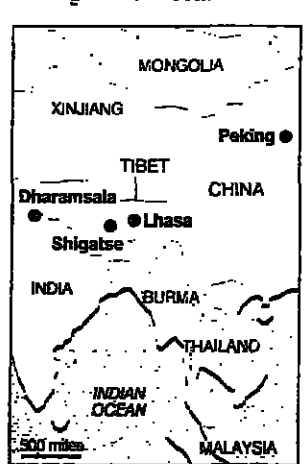
But never, throughout the centuries, have the Chinese emperors been called in to meddle with the arcane search for a Panchen Lama. The last Panchen Lama, the ninth in his line, was a chubby and jolly-looking 50-year-old who died in 1989 after having spent 10 years under house arrest for criticising Chinese rule in Tibet. Tibetans in Dharamsala claim that the Dalai Lama,

who is in his 60s, had wanted the true Panchen Lama to begin his religious instruction as swiftly as possible, so that when he dies the Panchen Lama can lead the Tibetan people until the next Dalai Lama is reborn.

When the Dalai Lama announced he had located the re-birth of the Panchen Lama last spring after mystical divination and consulting oracles, the child

and his nomad parents were seized by the Chinese off the high Tibetan plateau and have not been seen since. The Dalai Lama recently said: "At this moment the safety of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his proper religious training is of particular concern to me. He has not been seen in public for some months and is reported to be detained somewhere in Peking."

By installing their choice on the Panchen Lama's throne in Tashilhumpo monastery in Shigatse, the Chinese are trying to strengthen their hold on Tibet. Having failed to destroy Buddhism, even though the Red Guards demolished thousands of monasteries during the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese are now trying to use the Panchen Lama to undermine the tremendous influence the Dalai Lama has on religious and independence-minded Tibetans. This tactic, according to Tibetan experts, is likely to fail: few Tibetans are willing to let the Chinese dictate in matters of Buddhist faith and tradition.



Dalai Lama: Power struggle with Chinese

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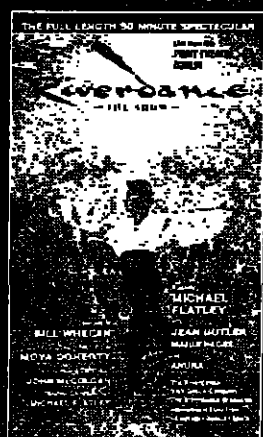
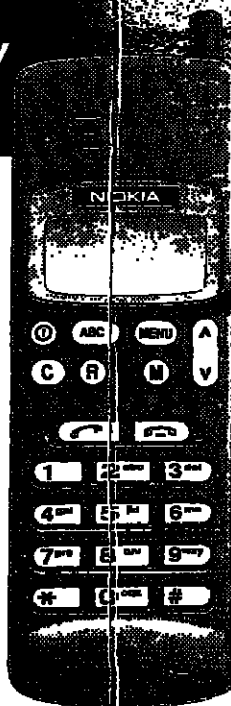
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## argument

# No significant risk from beef

As the debate about BSE continues, we print the second of two contributions from eminent scientists. **Robert Will** argues that the chance of disease crossing to humans is minimal

Professor Blakemore's article in yesterday's *Independent* provided a concise discussion of the evidence relating to the possibility that bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) might cause a spongiform encephalopathy in the human population. Although most scientists would agree that there is a remote theoretical risk from BSE, no link between BSE and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) has yet been demonstrated and the emphasis in

Professor Blakemore's conclusions on a risk in relation to beef is, in my view, misleading and almost certainly wrong.

Transmission by the oral route in these diseases is extremely inefficient, requiring exposure to large doses of infectivity. In kuru, the brain disease found among New Guinea people and referred to by Professor Blakemore, women and children were predominantly affected because they were exposed to tissues,

including brain, containing high levels of infectivity, in the course of ritual cannibalism.

Furthermore, the transmission of kuru may have been due to infection through abrasions in the skin rather than through oral consumption of human tissues. There is no good evidence of detectable infectivity in muscle in any prion disease, including BSE, and the BSE agent, like scrapie, may well not be a risk to the human population at all.

The transmission of BSE to a number of species, including domestic cats and captive zoo animals, was almost certainly due to the dietary exposure of

these species to foodstuffs containing brain and spinal cord from cattle, tissues that have high levels of infectivity. Professor Blakemore is wrong to sug-

gest that beef products were the likely cause of cross-species transmission of BSE, as detectable infectivity has been found only in brain and spinal cord

in natural cases of BSE.

The crucial issue is the level of exposure to infection and this may be the reason why BSE has transmitted to other species rather than implying a more potent infectious agent. It is of note that there are many zoo species which must have been exposed to BSE through foodstuffs but have not developed a spongiform encephalopathy.

From the perspective of human health, it is clearly essential that people are not exposed to levels of infection that might cause disease, if the BSE agent were a risk to man.

The specified bovine offals (SBO) ban introduced in 1989 has ensured that brain and spinal cord, together with other tissues that might theoretically contain significant infectivity, are excluded from the human food chain. It is clearly essential that the SBO ban is applied rigorously and that any possibility of failure of the SBO ban is promptly and appropriately dealt with.

The possibility of vertical transmission of prion disease is "frightening", as Professor Blakemore suggests, not least to those individuals at greater

**Even if the BSE agent were a risk to man, oral transmission would require very high levels of infectivity**

risk of CJD; for example, recipients of human pituitary-derived hormones. However, there is no good evidence of maternal transmission of CJD, or kuru, nor indeed of any other prion disease. The long-held view that scrapie was transmitted maternally has recently been vigorously challenged and epidemiological evidence suggests that if vertical transmission of BSE occurs at all, this must be at a very low rate.

It is likely that the occurrence of BSE in animals "born after the ban" is related to continued exposure to contaminated cattle feed rather than to maternal transmission.

As Professor Blakemore points out, the incubation period in CJD is not known. However, in kuru, the minimum incubation period was four years and the maximum more than 30 years; in the tragic cases of accidental transmission of CJD through contaminated pituitary hormones, the mean incubation period is approximately 13 years.

In all prion diseases, the route of exposure influences the incubation period; as pituitary hormones were given by injection, it is reasonable to presume that less efficient oral exposure would result in a significantly longer incubation period. One implication is that if a link between BSE and CJD were established, this would reflect exposures that took place perhaps 10-15 years ago, ie, before the SBO ban and perhaps before BSE was even identified.

The recent upsurge in interest in CJD has been prompted by a number of factors: an increase in the total number of cases of CJD in the UK, the occurrence of CJD in four

farmers with potential occupational exposure to BSE, and identification of two cases of CJD in teenagers. The incidence of CJD remains similar to other countries in Europe and also elsewhere, indicating there is no relative increase. The incidence of CJD in the UK that can be attributed to BSE is similar to the UK. Again, there appears to be no increased relative risk in the UK to farmers that can be related to BSE.

The occurrence of CJD in teenagers is tragic, but cases of CJD in teenagers have been described previously in other countries where there cannot be a link with BSE. There is also the possibility that cases of CJD in younger patients may previously have been missed because of misdiagnosis. In Poland, three young patients with CJD were thought to be suffering from the rare measles-related disease SSPE, which shares many of the clinical features of CJD.

In my opinion, there is a risk of over-interpreting small numbers of cases, and statistical analysis may be unreliable. In the United States in the Eighties, two primary school teachers developed CJD within a few months, having taught in the same school, and "clusters" of cases of CJD have been described in a number of countries over the past 20 years.

There are limitations to the epidemiological study of a rare disease as it may be impossible to assess the significance of minor changes, although continued surveillance of CJD will allow any major change to be identified, particularly if comparisons with other countries without BSE continue.

It is also important to consider whether any other mechanism may allow the source of infection in individual cases of CJD to be identified. Transmission studies in mice may provide further evidence on agent source in specific cases; such studies are already under way.

No link between BSE and CJD has been established, but the possibility of such a link cannot be excluded for many years because of the long incubation period in these diseases. In my view, the possibility of such a link remains theoretical, but even if the BSE agent were a risk to man, oral transmission would require exposure to high levels of infectivity, as in kuru.

This is why the SBO ban is so important and why I believe the risk from eating beef is negligible. I agree with much of Professor Blakemore's article, but I do not believe it is reasonable to conclude that there is significant risk from eating beef; I have therefore not altered my consumption of beef or beef products, and neither have any of my colleagues at the CJD Surveillance Unit.

The writer is head of the CJD Surveillance Unit at Edinburgh's Western General Hospital



Contaminated cattle feed is the most likely reason for the continuing occurrence of BSE in farm animals

Photograph: Brian Ha

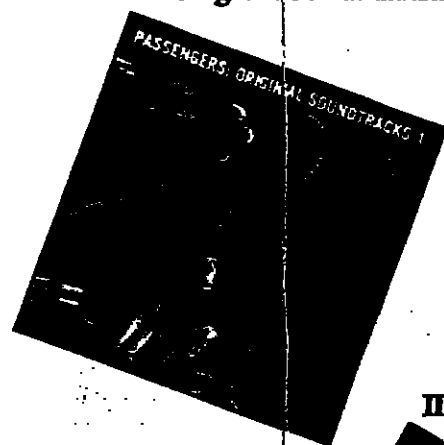
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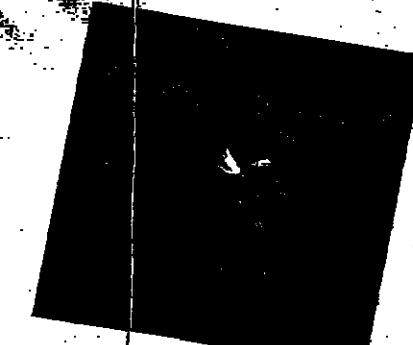
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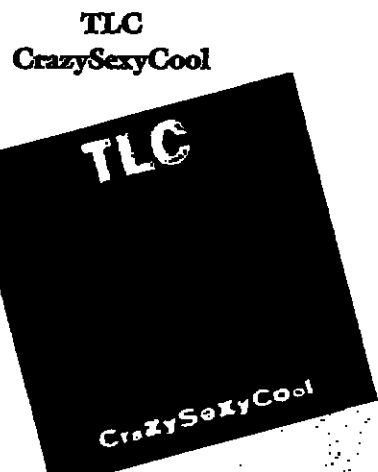
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Experts disagree over eating beef

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# James Reston

James B. Reston was his by-line, but to his family, his colleagues and the world at large he was known as Scotty. He was the outstanding American journalist of the post-war period. For nearly half a century as a reporter and columnist for the *New York Times* he achieved more major scoops, interviewed more world leaders and won more respect from his fellow journalists than anyone else in the news business. Because of his personal integrity he was trusted by those who provided the news as well as by those who read it.

As his nickname implied, Reston was born in Scotland. His father, a small, kindly man with strong Calvinist beliefs, left Clydeside for Dayton, Ohio, in 1911, when his son was only two. But domestic and financial problems overwhelmed the family and they returned to Scotland. In 1920, a lean time on Clydeside, Reston senior went to Ohio again, eventually found work, and sent for his family to join him.

Within a few days of his second arrival in America young Reston, then aged 10, landed his first paying job as a caddy at the local golf club. A regular player there was the Governor of Ohio, James Cox, who had just been defeated by Warren Harding in his bid for the American presidency. Governor Cox encouraged young Reston to learn the game himself. He gave him a couple of clubs and paid for some professional lessons. The boy spent all his free time on the course and won several junior championships.

His skill at golf helped him finance his way through the University of Illinois School of Journalism, where he got a post in the university sports publicity office and became the captain of the university golf team. It was at the School of Journalism that he met Sally, the intelligent, dark-haired, vivacious daughter of Judge William Fulton. Until then Scotty Reston had been a superb athlete but an indifferent student. He raised himself to her standards and began to do well academically. His autobiography *Deadline*, published in 1991, is the story of the two loves of his life; his adopted country, and Sally Fulton, whom he married on Christmas Eve 1935.

Governor Cox did Reston a further good turn. He helped him procure a job as a sports writer on one of the Cox newspapers in Ohio. This in turn led to his becoming the publicity di-

rector of a baseball team, the Cincinnati Reds, and later a sports reporter for the Associated Press in New York. In 1937 the news agency transferred him to London, essentially to cover Wimbledon, the Grand National, championship prize fights and international golf matches, rather than the looming threat of war. He and Sally enjoyed getting to know England. The doctor who delivered their eldest son Dick was a courteous young man called John Peel, later the famous Sir John Peel who attended the Queen when each of her four children were born.

On 1 September 1939, the day that Hitler attacked Poland, Reston transferred to the London bureau of the *New York Times*. He reported London at war in its early stages, but towards the end of the Blitz he developed an undulant fever and was shipped back to America. He was attached to the Washington bureau of the *New York Times*. It was his first experience of the city he was later to dominate so decisively.

While working as a reporter Reston wrote a book, *Prelude to Victory*, which challenged the widespread mood of isolationism common in the American Congress in 1941. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor the Office of War Information, the US propaganda agency, asked the *New York Times* to release Reston to work in London. While he was there the new publisher of the *Times*, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, called on the American ambassador, John Winant. Winant summoned Reston to help answer a question, mentioning to Sulzberger that Reston was on temporary leave from the *New York Times*, and jokingly adding that without his support the entire Allied war effort would collapse. The publisher thereupon invited Reston to come for a private talk and shortly made him his personal assistant. As Reston said, London was his lucky town.

After a visit with Sulzberger to Moscow, and a formative spell at the head office in New York, Reston reverted to Washington. His beat was the foreign embassies. President Roosevelt, after his fourth-term victory in 1944 and with the war reaching its climax, called an international conference at Dumbarton Oaks, a fine mansion in the Georgetown area of Washington, to discuss the terms of peace and the organisation of the post-war world.

Reston was assigned to cov-

er Dumbarton Oaks. He had the good fortune to meet there a Chinese friend, Chen Yi, who had been apprenticed to the *New York Times* before the war. Chen Yi was attending as a junior member of the Chinese (Nationalist) delegation. Reston discovered that Chen Yi had the complete texts of the proposals being discussed by the US, British, Soviet and Chinese delegations. He congratulated his old friend on his successful career and persuaded him that it would be a pity not to share these wonderful proposals with the peoples who had suffered so much during the war. Reston added that the *New York Times*, as the only American paper of record, would devote the space necessary for their complete and careful publication.

Without delay Chen Yi opened his briefcase and handed Reston the whole collection of documents in English. He hurried back with them to Arthur Hays Sulzberger, the *Times* bureau chief, and they arranged that the paper should publish the US text one day, the Soviet the next, and so on. There was a furious rumour at Dumbarton Oaks. Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet delegate, accused the *New York Times* of trying to divide the Allies. The US Secretary of State, Edward Stettinius, charged Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador, with committing an "outrageous breach of security", but the conference survived and Reston was awarded his first Pulitzer Prize.

After steadily enhancing his reputation Reston succeeded Krock as the Washington bureau chief in 1953. He then started writing a column of opinion and interpretation which was nationally syndicated in America and frequently reprinted abroad. It was written with style and insight, and frequently expressed the conscience of the United States, as when he said of Richard Nixon's role in the Watergate scandal, "There is scarcely a noble principle in the Constitution that he hasn't defended in theory or defied in practice." Sometimes there was humour. In the cloakroom of his house in Washington there used to hang the original of a *New Yorker* cartoon with one of those massive Helen Hokinson matrons sighing, "Oh dear, Mr Reston's being funny again!"

Reston arranged with his employers to forgo the services of a secretary in return for being allowed to appoint each year a bright young college graduate



'Scotty' Reston: 48 years with the *New York Times*

Photograph: Karen of Ottawa / Camera Press

to answer the mail, find the missing facts and review his copy. This system, akin to the clerks to Justices of the Supreme Court, was recommended by one of them, his friend Felix Frankfurter. It enabled Reston to build a remarkably talented Washington bureau for the *New York Times*, and to start a number of excellent American journalists on their newspaper careers.

Reston's second Pulitzer Prize came for his reporting of the 1956 presidential election, in which Dwight Eisenhower beat Adlai Stevenson for second time. Stevenson was Reston's favourite political loser. I remember lying on the floor next to Reston outside the Illinois Caucus room at the beginning of the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1952. We were listening through the gap under the door as Stevenson earnestly pleaded with the Illinois delegates not to nominate him. As governor of the host state he had just made a rousing speech of welcome, which had put heart into the dispirited Democrats, but he wanted to remain Governor of Illinois. Nobody needed to save the United States from Eisen-

hower. Stevenson argued, and couldn't if he tried, after 20 years of Democratic rule.

In 1964 Scotty Reston returned to New York to become the associate editor of the paper, and from 1968 the executive editor with principal responsibility for directing the news of the daily and Sunday papers. However after a few years he decided he was happier writing in Washington than editing in New York. He and his wife made frequent trips abroad, for his reputation guaranteed him ready access and exclusive interviews with any of the world's leaders.

After 48 years with the *New York Times* Reston wrote his last regular column in August 1987. In it he said:

I would feel better if marriage were more popular, but I doubt if so many people were ever so well fed, read, or bright-minded and curious and critical as the rising generation is today. My hope for them, after more than 52 years of married life, is that they'll finally know what old love is.

Reston had had a singularly rewarding family life. Sally was a delightful hostess and a most supportive wife. She and Scotty bought the *Vineyard Gazette*, a famous paper on Martha's

Vineyard, which their eldest son, Dick, as editor has made into the best weekly in New England. Their second, Jim, has written highly successful political biographies, and might have been the first journalist to travel in a space mission, but for the Challenger disaster in 1986 which put a stop to civilian passengers. The youngest, Tom, now a lawyer, was a State Department spokesman during the Carter administration.

Leonard Miall

James Barrett Reston, newspaperman and author, born Clydebank 3 November 1909; reporter, *Dayton Daily News* 1932-33; publicity director, *Cincinnati Baseball Club* 1934; reporter, *Associated Press*, New York 1934-37, London 1937-39; reporter, *New York Times* London bureau 1939-41, Washington bureau 1941; staff, American Embassy, London 1942; personal assistant to the publisher, *New York Times* 1943-44, Washington bureau 1944-53; chief Washington correspondent 1953-64, associate editor, *New York* 1964-68, executive editor 1968-87; married 1935 Sally Fulton (three sons); died Washington DC 6 December 1995.

# Sir Ivan Ewart Bt

Ivan Ewart commanded a Motor Torpedo Boat during the Second World War as a Lieutenant RNVR. On the night of 17/18 January 1942, Ewart's MTB was one of a patrol of three which attacked a German coastal convoy off Boulogne. It turned out that the convoy was strongly protected by escort vessels, some towing "gun barges". The patrol came under heavy fire and Ewart's boat was hit and severely damaged. Both engines were put out of action and the steering gear destroyed, leaving the boat helpless in the water. Ewart himself was wounded in the right arm and lost his left eye.

The other two MTBs broke off the engagement and withdrew. Ewart decided that the only course of action left was to scuttle his boat, which was now on fire.

When daylight came the Germans picked up the survivors, and the wounded were taken to a convent near Boulogne which had been turned into a hospital. When he had sufficiently recovered from his wounds, Ewart was sent to the naval prisoner-of-war camp known as Marlag & Milag Nord, at Westerstede. Shortly after his arrival, Ewart was invited to take part in the construction of a tunnel, which was completed in the autumn of 1942. After a number of officers had successfully used it to escape, a perimeter sentry heard suspicious noises and raised the alarm. Ewart was caught in the tunnel as he was preparing to make his exit.

He soon made another attempt. A trailer truck parked in the compound overnight was due to leave the camp the following day. Ewart and a brother officer attempted to conceal themselves in a box, slung beneath the chassis, which housed the spare wheels. Unfortunately they were caught in the act.

B. Rowland

The enterprise had an unusual feature in that both men had recently lost an eye, and were wearing black patches. If

they had managed to flee the camp, they planned on being taken for victims of an Allied bombing raid.

The German authorities then sent Ewart to Colditz, where he spent the remainder of the war. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in 1945.

Ivan Ewart was born in 1919 and brought up in Northern Ireland. He came from a distinguished family which has for many generations run a business producing Irish linen; he succeeded his cousin as sixth Baronet in 1959. He had taken over the family business when he came back from the war, but, as a war victim who had lost an eye, he was ever mindful of the problems and disadvantages of the partially and totally unsighted. Ten or so years after the tragic loss of his wife in 1964, he went to East Africa to work for the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, and later to the Freda Carr Hospital in Ngora, Uganda. This work gave him much fulfilment.

A few weeks ago Ivan Ewart travelled to Germany with a friend - to meet Adolf Schmidt, a German officer who had taken part in the night action which had sunk Ewart's MTB. Schmidt told Ewart that on that dark night in 1942 they had opened fire on the British MTBs without much hope of success; one of the gun-barges being towed had fired a heavy-calibre shell, and this, by a lucky strike, had found its mark on Ewart's MTB. Ewart regarded the German navy as honourable adversaries and retained no animosity against the enemy. He considered them to be honourable seamen fighting for their own country.

For him, his meeting with Adolf Schmidt was an event for which he had waited more than 50 years.



Ewart: lost his eye in 1942

William Ivan Cecil Ewart, naval officer, businessman, charity worker, born 18 July 1919; DSC 1945; director, *William Ewart & Son Ltd* 1954-73; chairman 1968-73; succeeded 1959 as sixth Bt; chairman, *William Ewart Investments Ltd*, Belfast 1973-77; chairman, *Ewart New Northern Ltd*, Belfast 1977-84; President, Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry 1974; East Africa Resident Representative, Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind 1977-84; Administrator, Ngora Freda Carr Hospital, Uganda 1985-89; married 1948 Pauline Preston (died 1964; one son, two daughters); died Hillsborough, Co Down 29 November 1995.

# Kathleen Harrison

One of the greatest British film character actresses of the Forties and Fifties, the homely Kathleen Harrison made a career out of playing cockney mothers, maids and charwomen. After fame as the cleaner Ma Huggitt in the series of *Huggitts* film comedies and a long-running radio serial, she found a new audience on television in the *Sitties* with the hugely successful comedy-drama *Mrs Thursday*.

She was born in Blackburn, Lancashire, in 1892. Her family moved to London when she was five and the aspiring actress trained at RADA (1914-15), where she won the Du Maurier Bronze Medal. While playing *Eliza*, Doolittle there in *Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion*, the writer attended rehearsals and gave her a piece of advice that was to become the inspiration for many of the roles she would later play. "Go out into the Old

Kent Road and just listen to the women talking," he told her.

However, on graduation, she married and went abroad to live in Argentina and Madeira for eight years. On her return to Britain, Harrison made her stage debut as Mrs Judd in *The Constant Flirt*, at the Pier Theatre, Eastbourne, in 1926, and appeared in the West End for the first time the following year as Winnie in *The Cage*, at the Savoy Theatre. Her many subsequent West End plays included *A Damsel in Distress*, *The Merchant and Venus*, *Lovers Meeting*, *Line Engaged*, *The Corn is Green*, *Night Must Fall* - later repeating her role as the housekeeper in the 1937 film version - and *Sailor Beware!*, in which she took over the lead role of fearsome mother Emma Hornett that had made a star of Peggy Mount.

Harrison had already made her film debut with a small role

in *Our Boys*, back in 1915, when she returned to the screen in the 1931 picture *Hobson's Choice*, based on Harold Brighouse's play set in her native Lancashire. Cast firmly in the mould of cockney domestics and mothers, she appeared in another 85 films, including *The Man from Toronia* (1932), as Jessie Matthews' maid, *The Ghoul* (1933), with Boris Karloff, *Home from Home* (1939), as Sandy Powell's wife, *In Which We Serve* (1942), *Oliver Twist* (1948), as Mrs Sowerby, *The Winslow Boy* (1948), repeating her stage role as the respectable maid, *Scrooge* (1951), with Alastair Sim, *The Pickwick Papers* (1952), as Miss Wardle, *Lilies in the Spring* (1954), as Anna Neagle's dresser, *The Big Money* (1956), as Ian Carmichael's mother, *Alive and Kicking* (1958), with Sybil Thorndike and Estelle Winwood as three lively old ladies

escaping from a home), *On the Fiddle* (1961), as Stanley Holloway's wife, and *West 11* (1963), as Alfred Lynch's mother).

Harrison first played the London East End charwoman Ma Huggitt in *Holiday Camp* (1947), a film featuring the fictional Huggitt family and capitalising on a post-war leisure innovation. The public loved it and the actress continued in the role, alongside Jack Warner as her screen husband and, at various times, Jimmy Hanley and Petula Clark playing two of their children, when Rank tried to capitalise on the original's success by making the sequel *Here Come the Huggitts* (1948), *Love for Huggitt* (1949) and *The Huggitts Abroad* (1949). When the series received a critical mauling, Rank axed it, but such was the Huggitts' popularity that they switched to radio in *Meet the Huggitts*, a serial that ran from 1953 to 1962.

As her cinema appearances became less frequent, Harrison also turned to television, finding a large following as the star of *Mrs Thursday*, a role created for her by Ted Willis in 1966. Again, the series was panned by the critics, but viewers loved it and immediately made *Mrs Thursday* the most popular programme on television, even topping the mighty *Coronation Street* from its No 1 slot in the ratings. In the programme, also featuring Hugh Manning - later to play the Rev Donald Hinton in *Emmerdale Farm* - Harrison acted a charwoman who inherits £10m and the controlling interest in a multinational company.

Five years later, she turned down the title role in Jeremy Sandford's acclaimed BBC play *Edna the Inebriate Woman*, which won Patricia Hayes a Best Actress on TV award. Harrison's other television ap-

pearances included *Shades of Greene*, *Danger UXB* and two BBC serialisations of Charles Dickens novels, *Our Mutual Friend* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (Dickens was her favourite author). She made her final screen appearance in the 1979 Disney comedy chase film *The London Connection* in the small role of an elderly bystander.

In 1992, Harrison owned up to reaching the grand old age of 100 and received her telegram from the Queen, after a lifetime of making herself out to be six years younger. She was one of Britain's oldest surviving actresses.

Anthony Hayward

Kathleen Harrison, actress: born Blackburn, Lancashire 23 February 1892; married 1916 John Henry Bick (died 1960; one son, one daughter, and one son deceased); died 7 December 1995.



Harrison: cast as Cockney domestics Photograph: Hutton Deutsch

# Births, Marriages & Deaths

## DEATHS

KENZLAND: Mark, restaurateur, on Wednesday 29 November. Grave-side funeral service on 11 December at 2pm at the Richmond/East Sheen cemetery. Sharon Road, Richmond, Surrey. (Access to the left of Courtlands.) Flowers welcome, donations in lieu of flowers to a charity of the mourner's choice.

Announcements for Births, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths. Memorial services, Wedding announcements, etc.) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Office, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 0011 (24-hour answering machine) 0171-293 0012 or faxed to 0171-293 0010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER GAZETTE announcements (notices, funerals, forthcoming marriages, marriages) must be submitted in writing (or typed) and should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

## ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of York attends the Environment of the Archbishop of York, attends the "The Prince of Wales's Foundation for the Environment" and the "The Prince of Wales's Foundation for the Environment".

## Birthdays

Sir Ralph Carr-Ellison, Lord-Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear, 70; Mr Julian Cuthbert MP, 65; Mr Harold Elliott, 65; Professor Sir Roger Elliott, physicist, 67; Mr Richard Fletcher, film director, 79; Mr Lancelotti, painter, 73; Mr James Galloway, flautist, 56; Sir de Villiers Graff, former leader, South African Union, 82; Mrs Pauline Green, MBE, 47; Mr Alan Greig, 40; Mr Geoff Hunt, footballer, 54; Mr Stephen Jeffries, 38; Sir Peter Levine, chairman and chief executive, Canary Wharf, 54; Miss Jenny Linden, actress, 35; Mr Terry McPerron, footballer, 44; Sir Jonathan Parker, High Court judge, 58; Lord Prys-Davies, solicitor and politician, 72; Sir Bernard Rix, High Court judge, 51; Mr Paul Rutherford, singer, 36; Mr Maximilian Schell, actor, 65; Dr Sir Alan Stewart, former Vice-Chancellor of Massey University, 78; Mr Michael Singer, Editor, *Manchester Evening News*, 52; Mr David Vincy, chief executive and chairman, Lazard Brothers, 45; Sir William Wood, former Second Crown Estate Commissioner, 79.

## Anniversaries

Births: Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus), poet, 65 BC; Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, 1542; Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin, 1769; Charles Wentworth Dilke, editor and critic, 1789; George Alfred Henry, author of boys' books, 1832; Aristotle Maillol, sculptor, 1861; Georges Méliès, cinema pioneer, 1861; Georges-Léon Jules-Maxie Foydeau, playwright, 1862; Jean-Julien Christian Sibilla, composer, 1865; James Grover Thurber, wit and cartoonist,

1894; Deaths: Adrian Willson, composer and choralist, 1962; Sir John Davies, lawyer and poet, 1626; Thomas Corneille, playwright, 1709; Thomas De Quincey, author, 1859; Padraic Colum, poet, 1881; Herbert Spencer, writer and philosopher, 1903; Gertrude Jekyll, gardener, 1932; Golda Meir (Goldie Mabovich), former Israeli prime minister, 1978; John Winston Lennon, former Beatle, shot in New York 1980. On this day: Prince Albert Edward (later King Edward VII) became Prince of Wales, 1841; Pope Pius IX promulgated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, 1854; the first world heavyweight boxing championship, between the Englishman Tom King and the American John Heenan, took place, 1863; Clifton Suspension Bridge, Bristol, was opened, 1864; the first traffic lights were erected in Westminster, London, 1868; the German fleet was sunk in the Battle of the Falkland Islands, 1914; at Kiel, Germany launched her first aircraft-carrier, the *Grif Zepplin*, 1938; Great Britain, Australia and the United States declared war on Japan, 1941; Mr Arthur Scargill was elected president of the National Union of Mineworkers, 1981; Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev signed an agreement eliminating all ground-based intermediate-range nuclear missiles, 1987. Today is the Feast Day of The Immaculate Conception, St Eucharis, St Paschasius, St Romanus and Sophronius of Cyprus.

## Lectures

National Gallery: Colin Wiggins, 'Human Rights Day Special Lecture: *Goja, The Disasters of War*', 1pm.

Victoria and Albert Museum: Beth McKillop, 'Buddhist Ceramics in Korea', 2.30pm.

Tate Gallery: John Murdoch, 'Talking About Pictures in the Early 17th Century', 1pm.

## Receptions

Prime Minister, Mr John Major MP and Mrs Major were the hosts at a reception held yesterday evening at 10 Downing Street, London SW1.

## Vizards Solicitors

The partners of Vizards solicitors held their annual luncheon reception yesterday evening at Inner Temple Hall, London EC4. Among those present were: Lord Justice Beldam; Mr Crawford Lindsay QC; Mr Alastair MacDuff QC; Mr Patrick Teague QC; Mr Colin Mackay QC; Mr Richard Davies QC; Mr William Milburn; Mr Bryan Legg; Mrs Linda Legg; Mr Mike Powell, Residential Assurance; Mr Ian Paterson, Legal Insurance; Mr Alison Lawton, Solicitors General Insurance; Mr Paul Jacobs, Economic Insurance; Mrs Margaret Coussé, Economic Insurance; Mr John Wilson, BAA plc; Mr Nick Whitlam, Westminster Motor Insurance Association; Mrs Tracy Marshall, Neville Russell, Mr Brian Street, ECS Underwriting.

## Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 3.37pm.

United Synagogue: 0171-387 4300. Federation of Synagogues: 0151-202 2263. Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 0171-580 1663. Reform Synagogue of Great Britain: 0181-349 4721. Spanish and Portuguese Jews: 0171-289 2573. Congregation (Masorti): 0171-328 1626.

# Care worker can make disclosure to police

Re G (a minor) (Care Proceedings: Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Butler, Lord Justice Auld and Sir Roger Parker)); 25 October 1995

## LAW REPORT

8 December 1995

A social worker did not require the court's leave under rule 4.23 of the Family Proceedings Rules 1991 (SI 1247) before disclosing to the police potentially incriminating statements or admissions made by parents concerning unexplained injuries received by their child.

Although the child was the subject of care proceedings, the rule applied only to documents already held in the court's file.

The Court of Appeal by a majority upheld the local authority's appeal against the decision of Judge Elystan Morgan, sitting in Warrington County Court on 22 May 1995, on the effect of rule 4.23. The rule provides:

Confidentiality of documents (1) Notwithstanding any rule of court to the contrary, no document, other than a record of an order, held by the court and relating to proceedings in which this Part applies shall be disclosed, other than to parties, legal advisers etc) without leave of the judge or district judge.

Margaret de Haas (Cheshire County Council) for the appellant; Alexan-

dra Stansby (Michael Seward & Co, Warrington) for the parents; Paula Fallois (Rowlands, Stockport) for the child's guardian ad litem; Robin Spencer (Cheshire Police Authority) for the police.

Lord Justice Butler-Sloss said the police had two functions in such cases: the investigation of crime and the protection of children. They fully participated all over the country in inter-disciplinary arrangements recommended in the 1991 booklet *Working Together* (under the Children Act 1989).

The booklet did not have legal status but, with the lessons of Cleveland in mind, the emphasis upon co-operation, joint investigation and full consultation at all stages of any investigation were crucial to the success of government guidelines. There had to be free exchange of information between social workers and police officers together engaged in an investigation.

The information obtained by social workers in the course of their duties was confidential and covered by public interest

immunity. It could, however, be disclosed to fellow members of the child protection team engaged in the investigation of the possible abuse of the child concerned.

Rule 4.23 precluded the disclosure of documents held by the court and relating to family proceedings, to anyone other than those named in the rule, without leave of the court. The rule followed the long established practice of confidentiality of children proceedings, stemming from the practice in wardship cases.

In *Oxford County Council v P* [1995] 2 All ER 225, Mr Justice Ward held that a guardian ad litem should not, without the court's leave, have disclosed to a social worker, who then informed the police, that the mother had confessed to injuring her child.

Her Ladyship agreed with that decision; but in so far as both Mr Justice Ward in that case and Mr Justice Hale in *Cleveland County Council v F* [1995] 2 All ER 236 appeared to equate the position of the social worker with that of the

guardian, her Ladyship dis-

agreed. The guardian had no function outside the proceedings to which he had been appointed. A social worker's duties towards children in his area were far wider and were by no means confined to court proceedings. In many cases the children never came before a court. Some documents created by the social services department, such as written statements made for the purpose of care proceedings, would be covered by rule 4.23; but many, such as oral admissions recorded in writing in the social work file, would not.

Her Ladyship would give a more restrictive interpretation to rule 4.23 and limit it to documents held by the court in the court file. It was important that the rule should not be too loosely interpreted so as to cover information at a stage when it was not intended to be covered and which would be contrary to the wider considerations of the child's best interests.

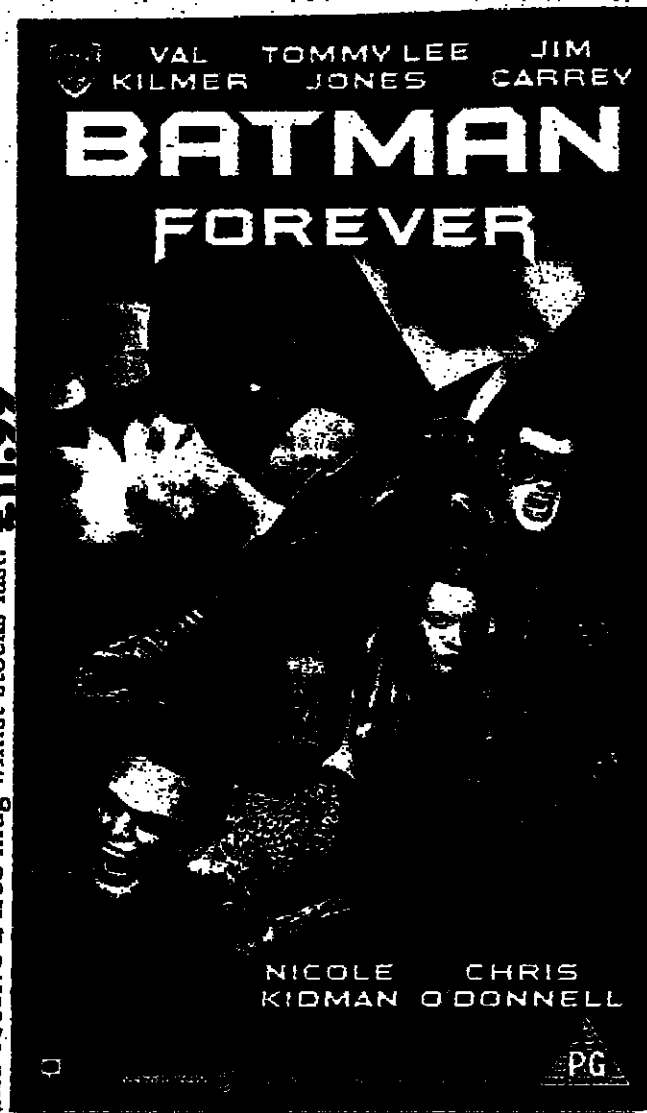
Sir Roger Parker concurred. Lord Justice Auld gave a dissenting judgment.

Paul Magrath, Barrister

# Get the family together with a few crackers.

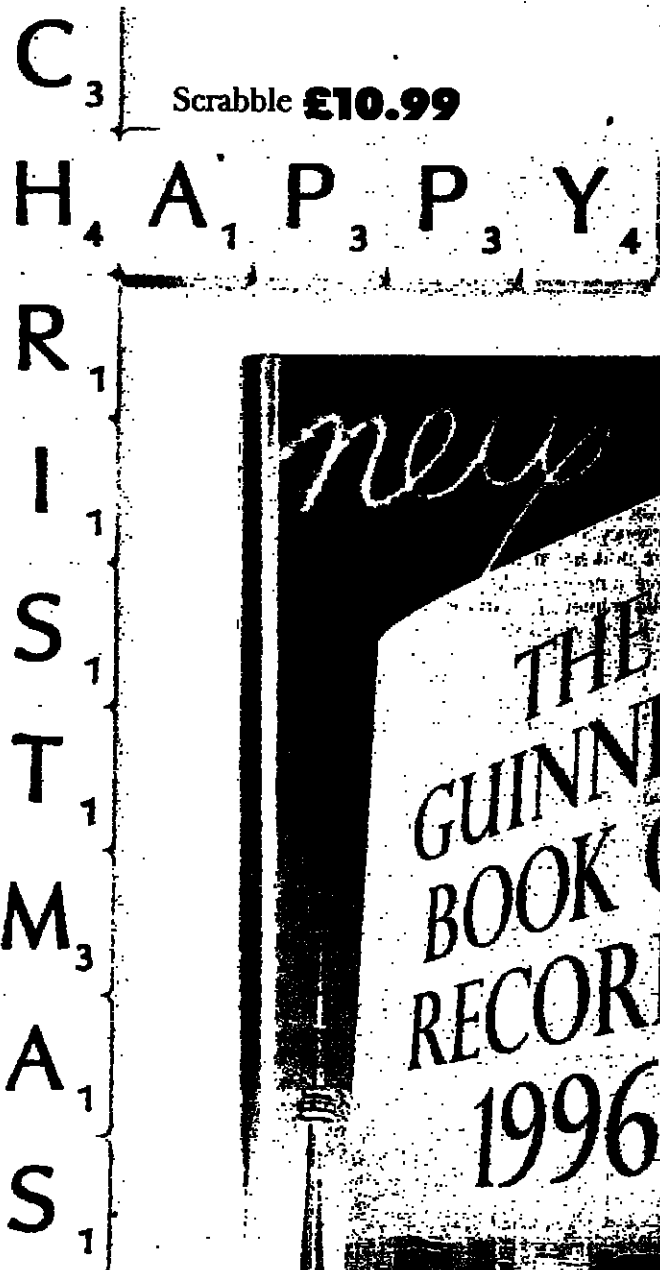


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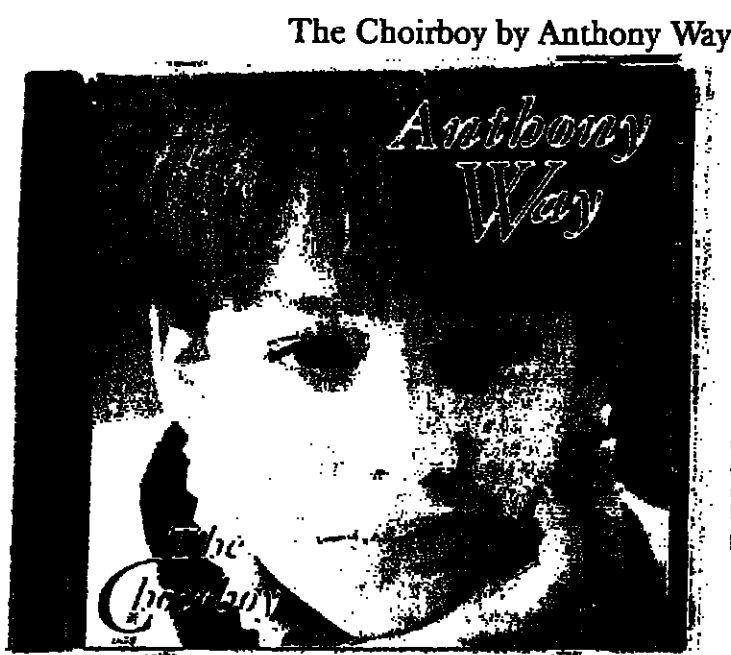
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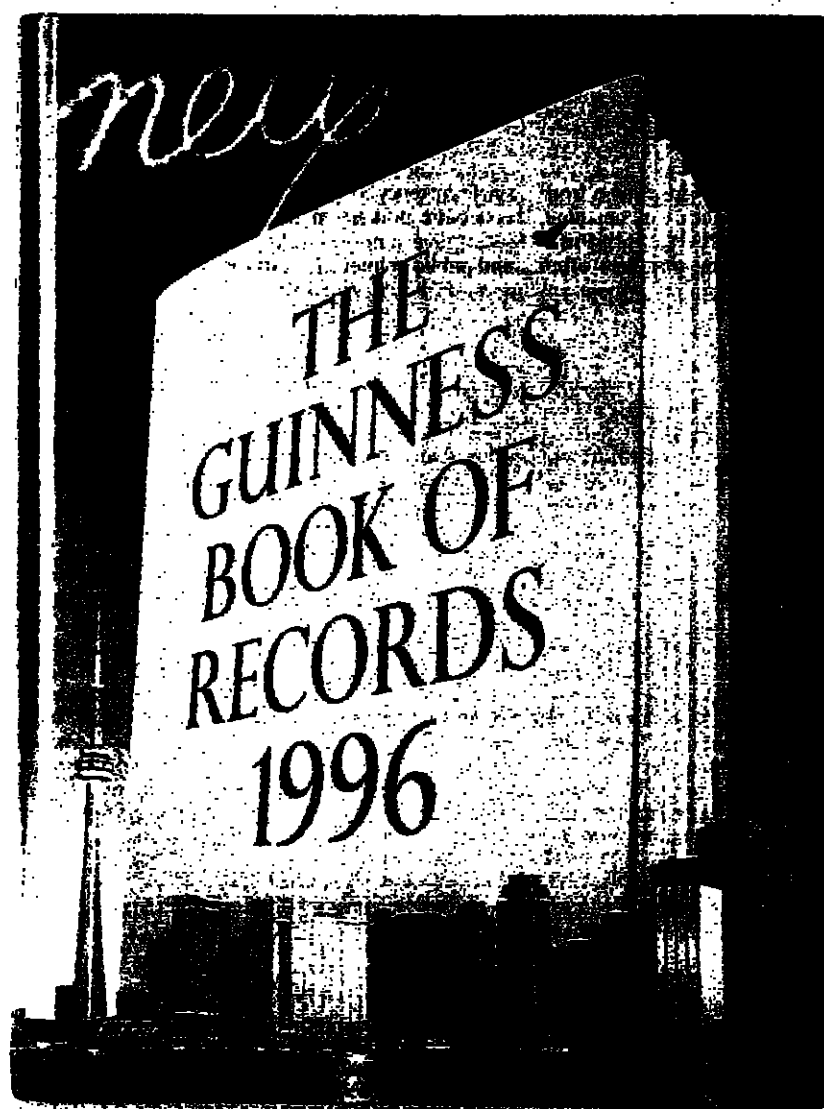


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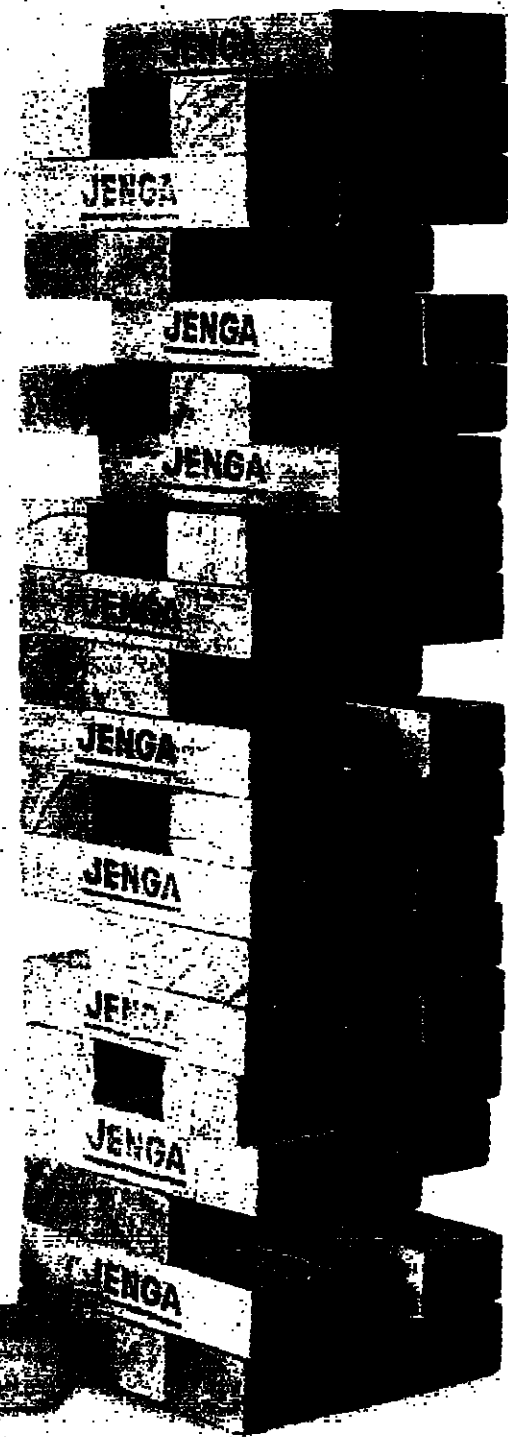
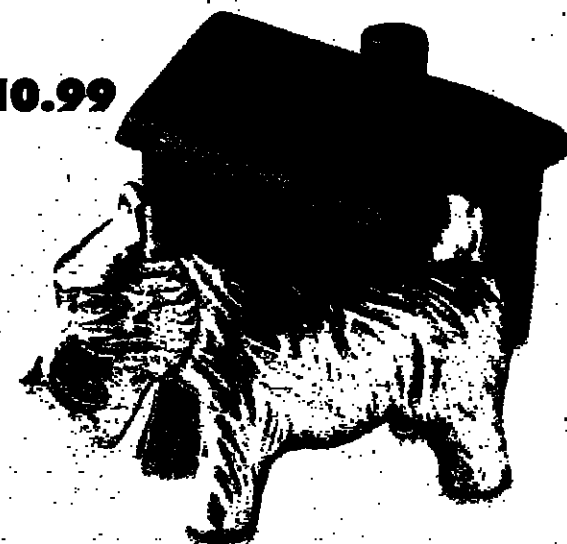
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## news analysis

Which member states will be ready for EMU?	Austria	Belgium	Britain	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Portugal	Spain	Sweden
Official government attitude towards EMU	Publicly committed	Publicly committed	Has an opt-out clause	Has an opt-out clause	Publicly committed	Publicly committed	Publicly committed	Publicly committed	Publicly committed	Publicly committed	Publicly committed	Publicly committed	Publicly committed	Publicly committed	Publicly committed
Who nationally would meet the criteria for joining the EMU in 1999?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes, Total debt currently above Maastricht limit but deemed to be coming down at an acceptable rate	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Who will meet the criteria for joining the EMU in 1999?	Probable	Probable	Possible	Possible	Possible	Possible	Probable	Unlikely	Probable	Unlikely	Probable	Probable	Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible
What each country needs to do to qualify for EMU	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level	Reduce borrowing and debt at an acceptable level
Do you agree or disagree with EMU replacing the national currency?	36.5% agreed, 63.5% disagreed	31.2% agreed, 68.8% disagreed	31.9% agreed, 68.1% disagreed	31.4% agreed, 68.6% disagreed	26.0% agreed, 74.0% disagreed	68.8% agreed, 31.2% disagreed	36.8% agreed, 63.2% disagreed	60.4% agreed, 39.6% disagreed	60.5% agreed, 39.5% disagreed	79.3% agreed, 20.7% disagreed	64.7% agreed, 35.3% disagreed	57.6% agreed, 42.4% disagreed	49.8% agreed, 50.2% disagreed	69.8% agreed, 30.2% disagreed	33.6% agreed, 66.4% disagreed

## Is 1999 disappearing into the 21st century?

Tony Barber looks at the ramifications if European monetary union is not in place by the deadline set at Maastricht

How satisfying it must feel this week to be a Tory Eurosceptic. France's social unrest is only the latest of several developments in the European Union that appear, in the eyes of the anti-European right, to support the argument that it would be deeply wrong to proceed with the planned launch of a single currency in January 1999.

Eurosceptics are confident not just that they have shifted the domestic political debate about Europe, to the point where British participation in monetary union is unthinkable, but that the debate on the Continent is also moving in their direction. They claim to see more and more evidence that European policy-makers, prodded by public opinion, are abandoning the ambition of launching the single currency in 1999 and may even ditch the project altogether.

Clearly, a growing number of politicians, bankers, industrialists, trade unionists and media pundits across the Continent are having doubts about whether European monetary union (Emu) can start on

schedule. However, most would profoundly disagree with the notion that they have something in common with what, in their eyes, is the negative Euro-phobia of the English nationalist Tory right.

For example, Italy's Prime

**No one in international finance and business is yet taking monetary union for granted**

Minister, Lamberto Dini, who is one of the very few continental leaders to have expressed public concern about the 1999 deadline for Emu, nevertheless sees himself as a committed European in heart and soul. When he agreed with John Major in Florence last

Wednesday that the EU must carefully study the impact of a single currency on participating and non-participating states, he was not looking for a formula to strangle Emu before it is born.

Officially, 13 of the EU's 15 states are dedicated to monetary union. In a 14th, Denmark, political leaders would like to join were it not that public opinion forced them in 1992 to obtain an opt-out clause from the Maastricht treaty deadline. Unhappily for the Tory Eurosceptics, they are less often viewed on the Continent as trend-setters than as troglodytes.

Yet it has become increasingly clear this year that the launch of Emu in January 1999 is by no means a foregone conclusion. Uncertainty about the prospects for a single currency dominate the economic and market analyses published by leading European investment houses. No one in the world of international finance and business is yet taking monetary union for granted.

It is a different story in the European Commission, whose

president, Jacques Santer, recently poured scorn on the intellectual prowess of Neil Kinnock, the transport commissioner, for suggesting Emu might not happen on schedule in 1999. However, it is a reasonable guess that Mr Kinnock's only offence was to say in public what Mr Santer and others have reluctantly contemplated in private.

The chief obstacles to the single currency concern national economic policies in the EU, inter-governmental relations and public opinion. To start the project on time, most EU governments are trying to cut public expenditure and implement other austerity measures to meet the strict Maastricht criteria on low budget deficits, public debts and inflation.

No doubt many governments are running such large deficits, and are accumulating such formidable high debts in their extensive social security systems, that they would be compelled to introduce belt-tightening programmes whether or not the deadline of January 1999 was approaching. As the

German government never tires of saying, healthy public finances are an objective always worth pursuing.

The fact remains, however, that it is fear of failing to meet the Maastricht targets which has galvanised governments into adopting deflationary policies at a time when millions of Europeans do not feel their countries have properly recovered from the most recent and very severe recession. Public opinion surveys repeatedly show that Europeans are pre-occupied with job insecurity and what seems to be a generally precarious economic future. But their governments are pursuing policies that merely intensify these concerns.

The result in France, and to some extent in Belgium, has been the eruption of sudden and widespread social protest. In Austria, the coalition government of social democrats and conservatives was forced to resign last October when it tried to introduce budget cuts. Mr Dini's government of non-party technocrats is finding it no easier to reform the public finances.

There are grave doubts, therefore, about the price that the EU may be forcing itself to pay, in terms of political stability and social harmony, if it goes ahead with monetary union in 1999. A related point is that, since a majority of EU governments will probably fail to qualify for the single currency, Emu could prove a factor dividing the member-states among themselves.

An EU in which Germany and France formed a monetary union, but Britain, Italy and Spain stayed outside, could lead to bitter accusations that one group was putting the other at a disadvantage because of its economic policies. Emu insiders would be watching like hawks for signs that outsiders were letting their currencies slip in search of a competitive edge, while outsiders might complain that they were being forced to pay an interest-rate premium for being kept out of monetary union.

If the EU decides, next year or in 1997, that the 1999 deadline is unrealistic, financial markets will almost certainly take

it as a signal that the French franc and some other currencies are overvalued. They will mark them down and pour money into the German mark.

According to many continental advocates of Emu, this could prove fatal to Europe.

**Three are grave doubts about the price the EU may be forcing itself to pay, in term of political stability**

Postponement of monetary union, they say, would irreversibly damage the EU's single market, launched in 1993, and set back the cause of closer political integration.

It would also delay the admission of former Communist countries in central and

eastern Europe. Europe would be in danger of losing its historic chance, created by the 1989 revolutions, to unite itself in peace and freedom.

But perhaps events need not take such an apocalyptic course. Failure to achieve monetary union in 1999 would represent a setback, but not eternal disaster. EU countries would still have the same incentives as now to pursue exchange-rate convergence and financial discipline at home.

The EU need not dismantle the European Monetary Institute, forerunner of the future European central bank, or tear up any of the detailed plans now being prepared for introducing a single currency. It would simply acknowledge that the Maastricht schedule was too tight for today's circumstances and it is better for Emu to start later.

For sure, postponing the single currency carries risks. But monetary union is a big idea, the biggest in EU history, and Tory Eurosceptics should understand that it is not going to disappear in a hurry.

## Wilkes's

Rupert Allason, aka the spy writer Nigel West, is likely to be a lone voice raised during the forthcoming Second Reading of the MIS Bill. The Home Secretary is trying to give MIS a wider role in combating crime, shoulder to shoulder with the police. Wilkes's old Cambridge friends in MI6 – the classic James Bond organisation – are aghast at the way MIS is expanding its empire, even to the point of openly advertising for recruits, while MI6 has been forced to cut its agents overseas.

So 007 is no longer able to afford the cost of living in Russia, and lavish beach apartments in the Caribbean are no longer allowed on MI6 expenses. But that is not Rupert's main objection. Nor is it even that he will have less material for his books; after all, the potential "nut wars" between MIS and the police will provide pure gold for novels.

No, the spy writer is privately warning clues around the fact that turning MIS into an undercover branch of the police is wholly unsatisfactory because MIS officers – who need to protect their anonymity – will not be able to give evidence in open court. Allason reckons MIS is not really up to taking evidence and statements and all the huddlesome paperwork that policemen on the beat have to deal with on a routine basis. Why should the MP bother about this? In his spare time, he has also acted as a special constable, m'lad. I rest my case.

The Home Secretary is robustly supporting the Government's line on the safety of beef, in spite of the scare stories. Wilkes spied Michael Howard tucking into a hearty serving of calf's liver at the Soho House in Greek Street. The traditional preference in the Commons for beef may explain the past behaviour of some of Wilkes's backbench colleagues. Nevertheless, Wilkes would like to see more ministers following Howard's example. Stephen Dorrell, the whimsical Health Secretary, should set the standard by ordering beef sandwiches for the whole Cabinet at next Thursday's meeting. With a liberal helping of beef dripping.

At least the Department of Health's employees are doing their bit to combat BSE scaremongering. The departmental canteen menu has been boasting minced beef and onion pie



Allason, shaken and stirred

for £1.50. It has been outselling the vegetable lasagne two to one.

An exclusive leaked document has fallen into Wilkes's hands: the proposed ministerial Christmas message by Michael Heseltine, Deputy Prime Minister, drawn up by the private public relations consultancy Sweet F Associates, says seasonal objectives include a "shift of the organisational dynamic to achieve a system-wide delivery of the core mission statement ..." (ie, Happy Christmas). The methodology recommended by Sweet FA is "a whole systems approach enabling recipients to tailor throughput of the message within their own organisational matrix" (ie, they might send a card).

To evaluate the outcome, Sweet FA says: "Ministers are aware of the concern of DPM (Deputy Prime

Minister] and EDCP [the Cabinet committee that he chairs on the Government's self-promotion] to ensure interdepartmental co-ordination and presentational cohesion, and to identify a lead Department responsible for ensuring that duty ministers are available to take media bids on the day."

"If ministers are content to proceed on this basis it is their wish that officials roll the pitch with key players before close of play on D-Day minus one to ensure a level playing field."

The whole thing is a spoof sent out as a Christmas card by the Department of Health's press office. It was written by Ronald Christopherson, the redoubtable chief press officer who was once under the wing of Bernard Ingham at Number 10, to poke fun at the PR consultants invading Whitehall at the invitation of the First Secretary. Wilkes trusts that Hezza will see the funny side.

Less than seasonal cheer has broken out around Westminster. After the incident at the Reform Club when the Prime Minister's biographer Bruce "the brute" Anderson was cut over the eye by a glass of wine hurled by a journalist's wife, there were uneasy scenes in Annie's Bar in the Commons, where a team of MPs behaved disgracefully after they were beaten by lobby journalists in the annual News Quiz. The MPs accused the journalists of cheating and refused to buy them a round of drinks. Annie's Bar rules oblige Wilkes to withhold the names of the MPs, but suffice to say that the quizmaster, Sir Harold Walker, a former Deputy Speaker of the Commons, made his excuses and left before the end of the game.

Labour MPs are all talking about one scene from *The Wilderness Years*, the excellent BBC documentary accounting for Labour's long years in opposition (which can be summed up as: Thatcher, Foot, Owen and General Galtieri).

The scene is not Denis Healey squeezing into his mini, or Tony Benn trouncing the leadership in a



Frank preferred pop to politics

conference vote, it is the footage of a young, permed Patricia Hewitt at the 1980 conference baring the Callaghan government for betraying the working classes (rallying cry: "We have a right to be angry ..."). The firebrand is now a respectable management consultant at Arthur Andersen.

Not all the Shadow Cabinet were watching on Sunday evening. Frank Dobson confessed to Wilkes that he was glued to *The Beatles Anthology* on the other side.

Wilkes's left-wing pin-up, Dawn Primarolo, who took over from Tony Benn as MP for Bristol South, has been backsliding from the Bennite cause. As a frontbencher in Gordon Brown's Treasury team and a member of the left-wing Campaign Group, Red Dawn has walked a careful tightrope and did not take part in the vote by some Campaign Group members against the 1p tax cut at the end of the Budget debate. Now Wilkes hears she has allowed her membership of the Campaign Group to lapse.

More evidence, sadly, that Hezza's touch is slipping. The First Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister got the thumbs down at a meeting of businessmen organised by Pro-Share, which promotes wider share ownership. His Labour-bashing speech prompted an immediate invitation to Alistair Darling, Labour's spokesman, to come and be their guest speaker next year.

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## What if EMU can't fly?

This week has been a bad week for European monetary union (EMU). Events in France have placed a large question mark over the ability of its government to achieve the Maastricht criteria by 1999. The Major-Dini talks suggested that 1999 was premature. Already there is much soul-searching in Germany. And two weeks ago Commissioner Neil Kinnock argued that 1999 was unlikely and unwise. The Kohl-Chirac meeting yesterday may have reiterated their determination to see the project through by the appointed date, but there is now more reason than ever before to doubt whether such a monetary union will happen before the end of the century.

What would this mean? The European Commission believes it would be a disaster, and many on the Continent share that view. They argue that a failure to move ahead with monetary union in 1999 would deal a body-blow to the whole European project. Their view of the process of European integration is akin to riding a bicycle: once you stop pedalling, you automatically fall off. Is this view correct? If it is not, then a number of our partners are in danger of risking internal stability and medium-term prosperity for the sake of a chimera. To proceed towards a single currency according to a foolhardy or ultimately unattainable deadline could be an act of irresponsibility. Those countries unable easily to meet the terms of entry might take (as some believe is now happening in France) draconian action too quickly. The result might well be a wave of res-

entment towards both national and European political classes which would endanger the very European project that monetary union is designed to bolster and reinforce.

The truth, as felt by many pro-Europeans on this side of the Channel, is that the bicycle view is wrong. It underestimates the strength and durability of a union that is now nearly 40 years old. It also rests on the proposition that the next stage of integration can only consist of monetary union. This is surely wrong. The widening of the EU to include some of the nations of eastern Europe is, in itself, an act of great historical importance. This enlargement will require an extension of qualified majority voting, an enhanced role for the European Parliament and (long overdue) reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.

Also on the European agenda for 1996 is the pressure for more co-ordinated foreign and (apologies to Michael Portillo) defence policies. We cannot rely on America always to be there to bail us out, as in Bosnia.

Events in Paris this week remind us how impatient some of our partners are for further union. Perhaps they cannot be persuaded that a slippage in the timetable for EMU would be no great tragedy. But we would find it easier to sell this approach to them if our diplomacy were more concerned with exploring the other possibilities in Europe, and less obsessed with fighting off encroachments from Johnny Foreigner. We can, if necessary, live without EMU for a few more years, because there are lots of other important things to do.

## Seeking the secrets of the universe

It has taken 20 years of work, \$1.6bn and 2.3 billion miles. Yesterday, the Galileo spacecraft entered the final phases of its mission as it plunged into Jupiter's orbit. Was it really worth all the fuss and the money?

Members of the US Congress are asking this question with an eye on the vast budget deficit and the politically sensitive squeeze on the nation's welfare spending. After all, why pay billions gazing into outer space when back on planet Earth there are children who need feeding and old ladies who require medical treatment? It sounds cheap to juxtapose the images, but these are the real choices faced by America's cash-strapped politicians.

It is easy to argue for funding scientific projects that generate commercial returns. The satellites that circle the earth have all kinds of pay-offs. Weather forecasting and monitoring the ozone level and global warming are all far easier thanks to those machines in the sky. The sugar beet industry even claims to save a fortune by using satellite pictures to check when the crop is ripe. And, of course, Rupert Murdoch uses them to send us round-the-clock coverage of some of the world's major sporting events.

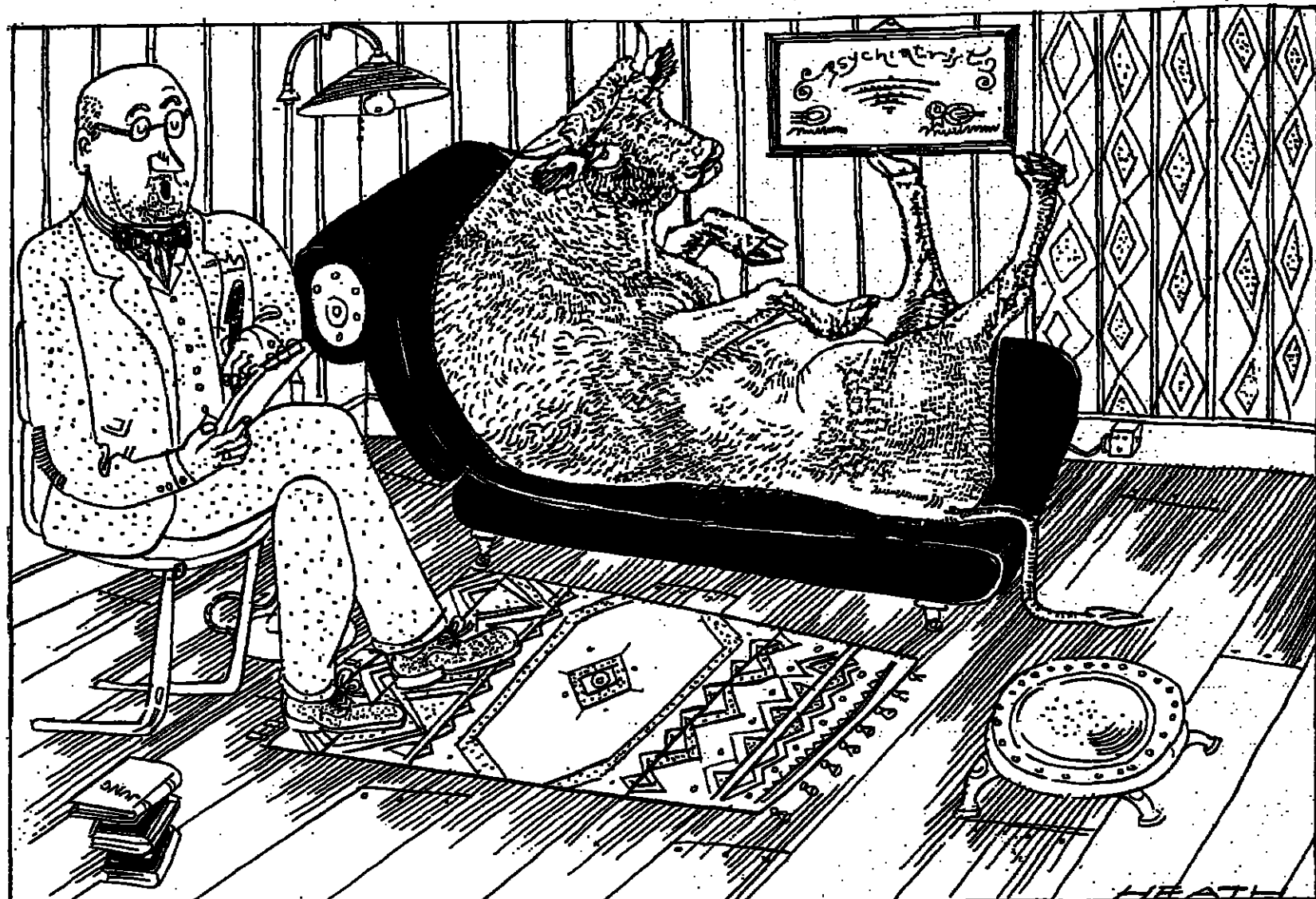
Satellites, sugar and soccer aren't much help in justifying Jupiter expeditions. The often quoted proposition that investing in space travel gave us non-stick frying pans as a spin-off is factually incorrect. But it is also crazy economics. The billions of dollars spent on space

travel could have been invested far more lucratively elsewhere. American scientists have even suggested that the cost of pouring all that brain power into space was to miss out on the emerging electronic technologies—and to cede the consumer electronics industry to Japan.

Of course, new improved consumer products aren't the only reason for investing in research. The scientific—if not economic—case for Galileo is overwhelming. We have the chance to discover the truth about that great swirling red spot on the planet's surface. And, if we are lucky, we may find some of the secrets of the universe lurking beneath Jupiter's clouds.

Where mysteries of the cosmos are at stake, scientists can draw on a wealth of public enthusiasm and support. After all, just think of all the films that have been made about space exploration. The success of *Star Trek* across the generations depended on "boldly going where no man has gone before." And the shelves of book shops are lined with accounts of the Big Bang and black holes. We are fascinated by the romance of the pursuit of pure knowledge and the beauty and secrets of the stars.

Not every space project will be worth the effort that goes into it. And the exact budget of the American space agency, NASA, is a legitimate subject for regular critical debate. But the never-ending quest to discover new worlds and expand our understanding is a vital and worthwhile part of what makes us human. Space exploration must boldly go on.



No, you're not mad, but you are a little depressed

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Some facts about the tribunal that condemned Saro-Wiwa

From Mr Michael Birnbaum, QC  
Sir: The Independent of 6 December published a lengthy advertisement by the Nigerian High Commission justifying the conviction by a Civil Disturbances Special Tribunal of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others. It made the remarkable claim that the tribunal was lawful and "recognised under the Nigerian Judicial system".

Under the Nigerian constitution, a defendant is entitled to a fair hearing before an independent and impartial court or tribunal. In a case of murder, the trial must take place in a State High Court. Before or during the trial, the accused can seek judicial review of the decisions of the trial judge. After conviction, he can appeal. In a capital case, that appeal lies as of right first to the Court of Appeal and thence to the Supreme Court.

However, in recent years, successive military governments have used a system of decrees and special tribunals to undermine these constitutional rights. In the Saro-Wiwa case, the government invoked Decree 2 of

1987. President Abacha personally nominated the members of the tribunal. Two were judges, the third, as required by the decree, was a military officer.

Section 8 of the decree provides that the validity of any decision of the tribunal may not be questioned in any court of law. Hence, no right to judicial review or to appeal. Hence, the inevitable failure of all attempts by the defence to challenge in the ordinary courts the legality of the tribunal and its decisions. Hence, the execution of the defendants within only 10 days of the convictions.

Curiously, the High Commission has experienced a recurrent difficulty in accurately describing to the public the nature of the tribunal. For example, in January it circulated a brief entitled "Trial of Ken Saro-Wiwa in the Civil Disturbances Special Tribunal", claiming that the tribunal was "made up of two serving High Court Judges". As in the advertisement the existence of a third, military, member was omitted.

It is important to publicise the true facts, not only in the interests

of accuracy but of justice: reliable reports suggest that in January the same tribunal will embark on the trial for capital murder of 19 other Ogoni defendants.

Yours sincerely,  
MICHAEL BIRNBAUM  
Temple  
London, EC4  
6 December  
The writer was an observer at the trials of Ken Saro-Wiwa and others on behalf of the Bar Human Rights Committee and the Law Society.

From Ms Ama Biney  
Sir: The attempt by the Nigeria High Commission to set the record straight for the Federal Government of Nigeria, in a half-page advertisement in your newspaper, is a despicable travesty of democracy. Nigeria, headed by Sani Abacha, has not only gravely wronged her own people but the rest of Africa. The ruling cabal is now seeking to rationalise its dastardly acts in the light of international uproar over the executions of the nine Ogoni activists.

General Abacha and his siblings in the London Nigeria High

Commission see no contradiction in the fact that they have the freedom to advertise in a British newspaper, yet prohibit Ogonis the right to mourn the deaths of their nine activists. They see no contradiction in the fact that they have outlawed the right of Nigerians to air contrary political views in Nigerian newspapers, yet they are allowed to air their distortions externally.

The present political crisis in Nigeria reveals that the problems of Africa have transcended the traditional concept of the sovereign nation-state. The political and economic problems faced by Nigeria are not unique to that country, though General Abacha continues to proclaim undue interference in the internal affairs of Nigeria. The problems abound all over the continent and that is why Nigeria cannot be left alone. What concerns Nigeria concerns all Africans genuinely concerned with democracy.

Yours faithfully,  
AMA BINEY  
Africa World Review  
London, SE1  
6 December

### Dirty war fought on British soil

From Mr H. M. Mahdy  
Sir: I would like to applaud Robert Fisk for his thorough reporting and analysis of the situation in Egypt (reports, 6 December). What troubles me, as a British citizen, is not only the barbarity of President Mubarak's regime, but that the Egyptian government is allowed to send its agents to practise their torture and shoot-to-kill tactics on British soil. The justification given is that Mr Mubarak's enemies are Islamic fundamentalists who are planning terrorist attacks.

One only needs to read Mr Fisk's coverage of the recent parliamentary elections in Egypt to know why the Egyptian environment is breeding terrorists

(reports, 28 and 29 November). The members of Muslim Brotherhood (a moderate Islamic group that condemns violence) who stood for parliamentary elections were sent to jail and hard labour by a military court for the hilarious reason of "holding anti-government meetings". Well, Mr Blair, Mr Ashdown et al should be extremely lucky that Mr Mubarak does not govern Britain.

Maybe there is not much that we can do for human rights in Egypt. But at least we should let President Mubarak know what we think of his government. We should withdraw any support, moral or material, to his regime. And, definitely, we must not allow his policemen/judges/executors to carry out their dirty war on British soil.

Yours faithfully,  
H. M. MAHDY  
Glasgow

### Moving furniture won't stop theft

From Dr Gary Slapper  
Sir: Although crime figures have spiralled upwards over the last decade, government policy relating to the prosecution authorities is now set to describe a full circle ("Big boost for police in CPS shake-up", 5 December).

In 1985, prosecuting offenders was a task taken from the police and given to a new independent authority, the Crown Prosecution Service. The rationale then was that the police were not the best suited to be prosecutors, as they would often have a commitment to winning a case where the evidence was weak. They were also not best placed to evaluate public policy considerations.

Now the Attorney-General is

about to install Crown prosecutors in police stations so as to "improve the liaison between officers and prosecuting authorities". The obviously intended result is that staff of the CPS (known to many police officers as the "Criminals' Protection Service") will be immersed in police culture and thinking.

It is the fault neither of the police nor of the Crown Prosecution Service that crime is an epidemic problem in the 1990s, so rearranging this institutional furniture will have no appreciable impact on crime figures. Major political and economic changes are to blame for modern crime, two-thirds of which is domestic burglary and theft of and from cars.

Yours faithfully,  
GARY SLAPPER  
The Law School  
Staffordshire University  
Stoke-on-Trent

### Church disclosure

From The Rev Roy Arnold  
Sir: As the person responsible for the release of the Nine O'clock Service story to the press—tabloid and respectable—I have to say that I found Bryan Appleyard's article ("A church in psychedelic chaos", 28 November) ill-informed and unfair. He implies that the tabloid press was responsible for the story coming to light. This is simply not true.

The Church of England uncovered the story when people in the NOS community began to talk to each other and to others in the Church of England hierarchy. Once it was established that a systematic abuse had been going on, the Diocese of Sheffield took rapid steps to look after the victims, to establish precisely what had gone on and to make a full and comprehensive statement to the media.

Mr Appleyard's contention that "but for the prurient nosiness of our tabloid press" the story would have gone undiscovered, amounts to a clear imputation that the first disclosure did not come from the church when, in fact, it did. Yours faithfully,  
ROY ARNOLD  
Sheffield  
28 November

### Playwrights' capital work

From Mr Jonathan Meth  
Sir: David Lister asks ("Lottery cash may fund new plays", 5 December) why shouldn't playwrights be left to the dictates of the marketplace? The system of state arts investment (I refuse to call it subsidy) in this country operates to provide resources to buildings and companies as the providers of the arts to the nation.

Practitioners, technicians and administrators employed by these buildings and companies are paid a salary, albeit not a very high one. Without a playwright, there can be no new work in theatre. Playwrights, however, are not part of the structural economic fabric of these organisations. They are brought in as hired hands, as and when others decide.

Good plays take time to evolve. They require development. They can and should take between six and 12 months to write. With very few exceptions at the uppermost echelon, playwrights are paid between £3,000 and £5,000 for a play.

It is widely acknowledged that Britain is fortunate enough to lead the world in this field. But on a freelance basis, without more opportunities to earn money, playwrights will inevitably move towards other media to make a living. This is the law of the marketplace, and it is why National Lottery funds to resource playwrights in the creation of capital assets, far from being elitist, is imperative if theatre is to thrive.

As the tabloids have clearly demonstrated, the lottery promulgates the myth that arts are an additional luxury, instead of vital to the health and wealth of our nation. Where does the real elitism lie—with playwrights earning a living wage for their work, or a windfall that allows the Government to continue to marginalise the arts via Budget cutbacks?

Yours faithfully,  
JONATHAN METH  
New Playwrights Trust  
London, NW5

### Required reading

From Mr R. K. Wohlleb  
Sir: One gets used to anti-German digs in the British press. A case in point is the report about the sale of the manuscript of Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* ("Epic manuscript sold for £276,000", 2 December). You claim that Remarque remained persona non grata in Germany for 50 years after his book was publicly burned by the Nazis in 1933. Not so. Remarque died in 1970, and his novel was required reading at my school in Germany during the early Fifties (the film version was shown at school as well).

Also, why do you not let your readers know who was the buyer? It was, in fact, purchased jointly by the state government of Lower Saxony and the Savings Bank of Osnabrück. Remarque's home town, to go on exhibition there in the local museum. Yours faithfully,  
R. K. WOHLLEB  
Teddington, Middlesex  
3 December

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

## Solitary words that live on baleful tenterhooks, alack

Q: You are here to tell us about the work of the Single Word Protection Society?  
A: That's right.  
Q: Would you like to tell us something about the work of the Single Word Protection Society?  
A: Certainly. Our aim is to stand up for those words in the English language that have been relegated to a single-use function and to plead for their reintegration into society.  
Q: I see. Could you give us an example?  
A: Of course. Take the word "dulcet", for example.  
Q: But surely "dulcet" is quite a normal word? It's commonly used, is it not?  
A: Is it? Can you give me an example of its being used?  
Q: Well, people sometimes do say, in a sort of mock-heroic way, "It's a long time since I heard your dulcet tones..."  
A: And that's it.  
Q: Pardon?  
A: That's it. That is the only time "dulcet" is used. In conjunction with "tones". No one uses the word "dulcet" without "tones". No one says, "I heard your dulcet voice" or "Now hear the dulcet singing of the BBC Chorus". It's a single-use word. But why not extend it? After all, "dulcet" is just another word for sweet and gentle, isn't it? You could easily look at someone in a dulcet manner or lay your head on someone's dulcet lap. Q: And you want us to use "dulcet" more often?  
A: Not just "dulcet". There are hundreds of words that are condemned to a solitary existence, words which could do a perfectly good job if given the chance.  
Q: Could you give us another example?  
A: I'll give you a couple. Unwed. Unsung.  
Q: Let me think, now. Unwed mothers? Unwed heroes?  
A: Very good. Mothers are the only people who are unwed. Never fathers. Never spinners. Nor is anyone saving a hero unwed. There are no unsung martyrs and no unsung villains.  
Q: I suppose you are right.  
A: There are no unsung mothers, and no unwed heroes.  
Q: Aren't there?



MILES KINGTON

A: Bated breath is just a shorter version of "abated breath". So we aren't too worried about that one—the word "abate" can look after itself. But there are many words that we are worried about: sackcloth, grist, parlance, shift, rakish, fell...  
Q: Stop! Explain.  
A: Sackcloth can only be used with "ashes", though "ashes" can be used without "sackcloth". This is extremely discriminatory against sackcloth. And grist can only be for the mill. Parlance can only be common. Shift can only be short. The only thing that can be rakish is an angle. There is only one thing that can be fell...  
Q: I presume you mean designs?  
A: Oh, I wasn't actually thinking of designs. Can designs be fell?  
Q: I think so. "He had fell designs on her honour..."  
A: You're right. I was thinking of "at one fell swoop". The word is not so threatened as I believed. It has two usages.  
Q: Carry on.  
A: We are also quite worried about "baleful", as you can only give people baleful looks and nothing else baleful.

A: Well, there are, but they are never called such. We are too lazy to do it. Our way with language is so predictable that all these single words are caught in a cliché trap. We are condemning these words to a dull, repetitive existence. In many cases we are in danger of forgetting what the word really means.  
Q: Which word?  
A: Bated.  
Q: Bated?  
A: Bated breath. With bated breath. What does it mean?  
Q: Um, I suppose it means on tenterhooks.  
A: What are or were tenterhooks?  
Q: Aye, there's the nub.  
A: Any idea what a nub really was?  
Q: Oh, get on with it and stop showing off.

صلى الله عليه وسلم



# Imagine – the elder brother I never knew

Where were you when John Lennon was killed 15 years ago today? The playwright Alan Bleasdale remembers where he was, how he felt and why it still hurts to think about the hero he never met

I am possibly the only person in Liverpool of a similar age to John Lennon, had he lived, who claims never to have met him. Or, indeed, any of the Beatles.

Believe me, everyone else had met one of the Beatles by 1963. The whole of the sixth form of my grammar school seemed to spend their weekends at parties popping pills in the presence of John, Paul, George or Ringo.

Especially George, for boy George, to his eternal chagrin, was and always will be the youngest of the Beatles. He was therefore more likely to be the social victim of a sad 17-year-old pupil who was only there popping pills, in the unlikely event that he was actually there at all, so that the pupil could stand taller and louder during school assembly on the following Monday morning.

This fame by association reached its zenith when a member of our chess club announced that his alsatian had impregnated Ringo Starr's mother's bitch. In the silence of castles and knights, someone else said that his mother was a close personal friend of Ringo's mother, and he knew for a fact that Ringo's mother did not have a dog of any description, and a fist-fight broke out.

Mind you, few ever spoke of John. For John was the leader of the pack. John was older, and John was dangerous and wore black leather. He did not suffer fools and schoolboys at all. Furthermore, he had the cruel power of sarcasm and that frowning "Who the fuck are you?" look upon his face.

No one knew then that he was hopelessly short-sighted and insecure and sentimental beneath the butch bravado and broken-nosed swagger. In 1963 he never talked about his dreadful childhood.

Naturally, John was our total, complete and utter hero. Paul was far too pretty and always got the girls. Ringo brought out the worst snobbery that a grammar school education could formulate, and George, well, you know, George was always so young...

An only-child, I seemed to have spent most of my adolescence and some of my attempts at manhood in search of the older brother I never had. Lennon was an obvious focus

of that desire, although with hindsight I suspect that it would not have been much fun being John Lennon's younger brother. If he could have seen me to find me, he probably would have hit me just for being there. And then felt deeply sorry. So the legend goes.

However, throughout the following two decades, that is how I very quietly considered John Lennon. I did not actually expect him to turn up at Christmas or at

we heard the worst news of all about someone "famous" we had known or admired, loved or even hated.

When I first heard that President Kennedy had been assassinated I was at the Cavern Club ("Home of the Beatles") in Liverpool. Eric Morecambe? Outside our house, in reverse gear, parking the car, listening to the news on Radio 1 and wistfully wishing to reverse for ever and ever. Elvis Presley? I opened our front door one morning and my big teddy-boy cousin fell into my arms in a mess of tears.

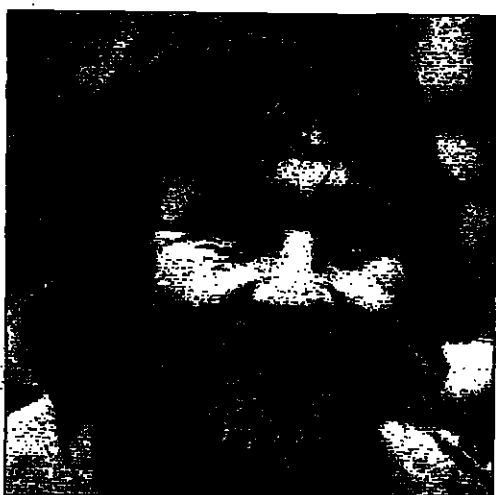
John Lennon? Oh well. Oh dear. For the first and only time that I can recall, I woke up at three in the morning and went up to the attic to stare at my typewriter. I am accustomed to working at that time – as I write this it is 4.55am – but usually I would not have been in bed in between the thought and the process.

Relax. There was no premonition. Relax. I was not the walrus in my dreams, and "In My Life" was not on the stereo. Lennon did not visit me upon a flaming pie. I was merely deeply worried about Act One, Scene Three.

So I soldiered on, armed only with tannin and nicotine, vaguely aware that my wife eventually woke and began to prepare our children for school. Just before eight o'clock I heard a wild, shocked and shocking scream from two floors beneath me. Convinced of a domestic accident, I hurried down the stairs to be met on the landing by my wife as she blurted out the already brokenhearted news that John Lennon had been shot to death in New York City.

I cried like I did not know that I could cry. I learnt later, when my mother died and our eldest boy was ill, that I could cry some more, but those are other stories. For, until then, death had stayed away from my vicinity since my grandmother died when I was seven. Maybe I had been saving it all up, to use it so ludicrously on this man whom I had, of course, not met, who was no doubt seriously flawed and certainly fatal.

I would, naturally, refuse to admit this at dinner parties, in public or in



I cried like I did not know that I could cry... until then, death had stayed away from my vicinity

christenings and family gatherings, but he was the one I thought about, worried about, read about, was both bewildered and delighted by, and the only one whose records I still bought.

I lived in hope that despite the disappearances, the drugs and the drink and occasionally attempting to wear a tampon on his head in an American night-club, my secret older brother might one day grow up. I never thought that he would never grow old.

It would be gauche to admit this at dinner parties, perhaps, but I guess all of us know exactly where we were and what we were doing when



print, but I ended up later that long day and night spitting in crazed, impotent rage upon the first published picture of Lennon's murderer, Mark Chapman, in the local evening newspaper.

I will gladly leave it to others more cold and qualified than I am to explain why Lennon meant so much to so many total strangers. I do know that it is terribly easy to be sardonic and sneer at that muddled man – and at people like me who loved him from a distance. Yet still I do not really understand why it is that right now, all of 15 years later, at dawn's feeble attempt to turn to daylight, I still find myself wearing my handkerchief on my sleeve.

You may recall that on the Sunday following Lennon's death, thousands upon thousands of people congregated on the steps of the St George's Hall in Liverpool to pay tribute and homage. I was asked to go, but I was suspicious of some of the motives and also I did not want to flaunt my mourning as nakedly as I now seem to be doing.

However, a good friend of mine and his wife were there for the final massed chorus of "Imagine", which accidentally coincided with the Sunday licensing hours. They joined the people who flooded into the nearest public house, a sawdust place that was not best prepared to be a barstool in history.

In the far corner sat an elderly man much accustomed to solitary drinking. He may or may not have been nursing that night's first pint of Guinness and a packet of Woodbines, but he was certainly bewildered by the succession of people who wailed into the bar sobbing and mumbling the mantra: "John is Dead".

Finally, this man in the far corner of the pub turned to my friend's wife and asked her what this was all about. Emotional, but not tired, she told him through her tears that it was because of John Lennon. John Lennon was dead.

The man in the corner thought about this information for a time and then turned to her and said "All this because of John Lennon? Fucking hell, can you imagine the scenes when Ken Dodd goes?"

Lennon would have loved that. I would have loved it a lot more if it had not been about John Lennon – that older brother I never had. I still cannot quite believe he is not still here, getting it all right and getting it all wrong.

## Engr. Inu, do you take me for a fool?

The letter is postmarked Lagos; it is addressed to me as Greer Germaine, care of my agent. Nothing unusual in that. The address can be found in any reasonably good reference library, even in Lagos, I imagine. No need to get nervous or imagine that somebody has sold my details to a blackbirding or white-slaving ring.

I should not divulge the contents of a letter sent to me in confidence. I know, but confidence is the name of this Nigerian's game, confidence trickery, and I reckon it is time you were told.

The letter purports to come from "Engr. Inu Mustapha". Engr. does not, in this case, stand for "engineered" but for "Engineer" – I think. Engr. Inu writes, or rather prints out, as follows: "Sir, – not the best beginning, you will agree – then under, in capitals, request for urgent business partnership". "First, I must solicit your strictest confidence in this transaction. This is by virtue of its nature as being utterly confidential and 'top secret'." (Alas, Engr. Inu, a little more research might have revealed that you were about to send your secret missive to a journalist who is also the least of vessels, a woman.) "You have been recommended by an associate who assured me in confidence of your ability and reliability to prosecute a transaction of great magnitude involving a pending business transaction requiring maximum confidence". In fewer words, "Someone tells me you are devious, greedy and stupid, with delusions of grandeur."

It is only proper at this point that I confess to a slight anti-Nigerian bias, not because a Niger-

ian dictator has recently offered a number of dissidents, which included a writer – such misfortunes can befall the nicest of countries – but because I once came upon a large Nigerian youth bawling his eyes out by Lancaster Gate tube station. He told me he had missed the bus laid on by his college to take him back to Darlington and had no money to get home and no idea how to get there.

Amid tearful protestations of eternal gratitude he had showed me an identity card and assured me that I should write to his parents, who were high-ranking officials in Nigeria, and they would not only refund any money I should give him but reward me handsomely for my noble behaviour.

I, imagining him to be a human being more or less like myself, assured him that this would not be necessary. As I was on my way to Covent Garden, it was easy to take him in my taxi and drop him at King's Cross with £20 for the expenses of his journey. I wrote my name and address on a card so that he could return the money, which of course he never did. Now I come to think of it, he probably wasn't at college anywhere, least of all in Darlington, and the people whose names he was bandying about probably didn't exist.

Engr. Inu's ingratiations continue: "We are top officials of the Federal Contract Review Panel who are interested in importation of goods into our country with funds that are presently



GERMAINE GREER

trapped in Nigeria. In order to commence this business we solicit your assistance to enable us to transfer into your account the said trapped funds. The source of this fund is as follows: during the last Interim Regime here in Nigeria, the Government Officials set up companies and awarded themselves contracts which were grossly over-invoiced in various ministries. The present Military Government set up a Contract Review Panel and we have identified a lot of inflated contract funds which are presently floating in the Central Bank of Nigeria ready for payment. However, by virtue of our position as civil servants and members of this panel, we cannot acquire this money in our names. I have therefore, been delegated as a matter of trust by my colleagues of the panel to look for an overseas partner into whose account we would transfer the sum of US\$21,320,000.00 (Twenty One Million, Three Hundred and Twenty Thousand US Dollars). Hence we are writing you this letter.

"We have agreed to share the money thus: 20 per cent for the account owner (you) 70 per cent for us (the officials) 10 per cent to be used in settling taxation and all local and foreign expenses. It is from the 70 per cent that we wish to commence the importation business. Please, note that this transaction is 100 per cent safe and

we hope to commence the transfer latest 7 (seven) banking days from the date of the receipt of the following information by Fax: 234-1-4974907, Tel/Fax: 234-90-407309 your Banker's name, company's name, address, Account number and fax number."

I, who bank at a 17th-century institution where clients are escorted into the banking hall by an imposing gentleman dressed as if Beau Brummel had died but yesterday, did not know whether to laugh or cry at all of this. The notion of delivering up my cosseted account to be siphoned off by these blackguards was not so much preposterous as sacrilegious.

Nobody who does what I do and works as hard as I do is interested in getting rich quick; even my lottery ticket is bought, when I can remember to buy it at all, in the name of my college. I once had a dream about becoming a millionaire and spent the whole night trying to work out what to do with my million, which turned into a million yards of red silk and was used to mop up the blood of slaughtered elephants, to my (in the dream) entire satisfaction.

Poor Engr. Inu had no way of knowing how wide of the mark his net had been thrown. But I have heard that the people who masquerade behind such masks as Engr. Inu's have made money out of gullible Englishmen, who really did expect barrowloads of hard currency to be shovelled into their accounts from a country that clearly has squandered its vast assets and its considerable credit in ways not wildly dissimilar.

### Generation Why



by Tony Reeve and Steve Way

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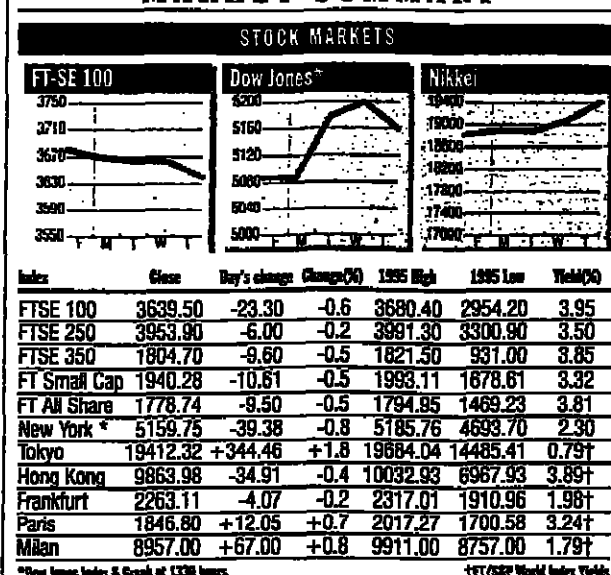
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**MARKET SUMMARY**



MAIN PRICE CHANGES							
FT-SE 350 companies (excluding investment trusts)							
Names	Rises			Falls			
	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change	
T & N	130	10	8.3	Arjo Wiggins	158.5	7.5	4.5
Airtours	338	17	5.3	Reed Int'l	999	48	4.4
GEC	314	12.5	4.1	Celltech Grp	555	24	4.1
Mil Labs	379	13	3.6	Medeva	256	11	4.1
Teleflex Hse	29.3	1	3.5	Nuvera	122	5	3.9

**MAIN PRICE CHANGES**

Rises	Falls
T & N 130 10 8.3	Arjo Wiggins 158.5 7.5 4.5
Airtours 338 17 5.3	Reed Int'l 999 46 4.4
GEC 314 12.5 4.1	Coltch Group 555 24 4.1
MI Labs 379 13 3.6	Medeva 256 11 4.1
Trafalgar Hse 29.3 1 3.5	Nynex 122 5 3.9

**INTEREST RATES**

Short sterling	UK medium gilt	US long bond
6.50	7.43	6.53
6.50	7.43	6.53
6.50	7.43	6.53

**BOND YIELDS**

Index	1 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year
UK	6.53	6.25	7.43	8.53	7.60	8.51
US	5.88	5.81	5.70	7.79	6.04	7.86
Japan	0.28	0.38	2.61	4.65	-	-
Germany	4.12	3.81	6.11	7.43	6.84	-

**CURRENCIES**

Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
\$ (London)	1.5378	-0.25c	1.564
\$ (New York)	1.5385	-0.65c	1.5636
DM (London)	2.2168	-0.61c	2.4674
DM (New York)	2.2168	-0.61c	2.4674
¥ (London)	155.602	-0.641	157.122
¥ (New York)	155.602	-0.641	157.122
£ Index	82.80	-0.10	80.5
£ Index	82.80	-0.10	80.5

**OTHER INDICATORS**

Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
Oil Brent \$	17.83	+0.24	16.34
Gold \$	388.70	+0.3	376.1
Gold £	252.76	+0.6240	240.660
RPI	149.8	+3.2pc	2.4
GDP	106.6	2.1pc	4.3
Base Rates	6.75pc	5.25	-

**IN BRIEF**

**High street sales dampen rate cut hopes**

Stronger high street activity than expected from the Confederation of British Industry's distributive trades survey helped to dampen hopes of an early cut in interest rates. The evidence of an upturn for retailers combined with Eddie George's remarks to the Treasury Select Committee - widely interpreted as hinting that he would oppose a cut in rates when he meets the Chancellor next Wednesday - to push gilts down by half a point. Retail sales volumes were up in November compared with a year ago, the CBI said. The balance of retailers who said sales were up rather than down jumped to 23 per cent compared with 16 per cent in October. The CBI said it represented the largest rise in sales since April.

**Warning from Blue Circle**

Blue Circle warned yesterday that its 1995 figures would be hit by a £65m provision to restructure its heating and bathrooms businesses, together with the underperforming home products division. The impact of the exceptional charge should be mitigated, however, by a one-off £55m profit from the sale of the company's landfill operation. The creation of "centres of excellence" for its different boiler and radiator products in the UK, France and Germany follows a review announced in September and the departure of Charles Young, the division's £193,000-a-year chief executive.

**Salomon cuts back in Asia**

Salomon Brothers, the US investment bank, has cut 50 jobs in its Hong Kong office, and further positions throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Asian markets have performed badly in dollar terms this year, in contrast to strong earnings from the US market.

**Brittan warns against EMU complacency**

Sir Leon Brittan, vice-president of the European Commission, said there was a "dangerous state of complacency" in the City about European Monetary Union and the far-reaching effects it would have. Giving the inaugural Life City lecture, Sir Leon said: "EMU will be, whether you like it or not, a factor in your competitiveness equation and given the importance of the City to the UK economy as a whole, this is something that should weigh with us when we come to make the decision about whether and when to join."

**Compass points upward**

Compass, the contract catering company, boosted pre-tax profits by 31 per cent to £73.2m in the year to 1 October. Turnover climbed 64 per cent to £1.51bn, and the dividend was increased 13 per cent to 7.6p. Shares rose 3.5p to 450.5p.

**Matra Marconi wins satellite order**

Matra Marconi, the joint venture owned by GEC and Lagardere, has won a £100m order for satellites from the UK Ministry of Defence. The order adds to an existing £200m contract.

**French crisis 'threatens single currency'**

The chief economist of Deutsche Bank has admitted that the worsening French crisis could destroy the dream of a European single currency because of instability in France and deepening doubts in Germany.

# Accountants rush for protection

ROGER TRAPP and JOHN WILLCOCK

About 10,000 accountants are poised to protect themselves from damaging legal actions that have the potential to bankrupt them.

Price Waterhouse and Ernst & Young, which each have nearly 400 partners and about 4,000 other professional staff, are widely expected to announce next week that they have opted to follow the lead of American firms and set themselves up as limited liability partnerships.

This will mean legally registering their operations offshore. Under British law partners are only allowed to limit their liability if they take no part in running the business. Accelerating the changes was

the High Court decision on Wednesday against Blander Hamlyn, whose 150 partners face ruin from a £105m bill for negligence. The firm is appealing the decision, but the judgment has set the rest of the industry running for cover.

Setting up on the other side of the Atlantic is not considered practical since - in the words of one senior partner - a court is likely to consider an audit firm operating in the UK as subject to UK law. But there is intense speculation that the firms may be planning to register themselves in an offshore financial centre closer to Britain, such as Liechtenstein, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man.

The expected move follows KPMG's announcement earlier this year that it is incorporating its audit arm in an effort

**Outstanding claims**

Firm	Claim
Price Waterhouse	Being sued as auditors of BCCI for \$3bn
Ernst & Young	Being sued as auditors of BCCI
Stoy Hayward	Being sued as auditors of Polly Peck for \$50m
Stoy Hayward	Being sued as auditors of Astra
Ernst & Young	Being sued by Lloyd's names for £150m
Arthur Andersen	Being sued by Lloyd's names
Coopers & Lybrand	Being sued as auditors of Maxwell Communications
Coopers & Lybrand	Auditors of Barings - administrators considering action

to give itself greater protection from spiralling negligence claims. It means that, with Coopers & Lybrand, the UK's largest firm, also considering some form of incorporation, most of the leading six firms are likely to have ceased to be con-

ventional partnerships by this time next year. As a worldwide organisation, Arthur Andersen is understood to be in a more complex position but considering its options, while Touche Ross has consistently stated its opposition to abandoning part-

nership status - although insiders suspect it may be looking at protecting itself.

Ian Brindle, senior partner of Price Waterhouse, which with E&Y is facing a \$3bn claim over BCCI, recently told an "alumni" dinner of former Price Waterhouse people that the pioneering incorporation plan of KPMG did not go far enough. KPMG is to turn part of its auditing business into a limited-liability company, but this would cover audits only of its biggest clients.

Mr Brindle argued that this did not give a complete answer to the potential threat of bankruptcy facing partners in Big Six accounting firms from the many huge lawsuits on both sides of the Atlantic. He suggested that PW would soon have a more comprehensive scheme.

Observers believe this could cover the whole audit business, the largest part of the firm. Alternatively, it could include the entire firm, embracing tax, consultancy and corporate finance work. Partners have been unwilling to turn their operations into limited companies because they would lose the tax and other advantages.

The claims have become such a problem that the profession is pressing for reform of the law of joint and several liability, under which an accountant can bear the total loss resulting from a corporate collapse. Because this would take such a long time to achieve, the profession is also campaigning for a halfway house - changing section 510 of the Companies Act 1983, in order to limit auditors' liability.

## Labour MPs break ranks on Murdoch

CHRIS BLACKHURST Westminster Correspondent

Labour MPs have broken ranks with the party hierarchy by coming out to condemn the Byzantine tax avoidance arrangements of Rupert Murdoch's News International.

When the Independent revealed last week that over the last decade News International made nearly £1bn in profits but paid just £11.74m in tax, Labour said nothing. The party that is usually quick to condemn City "fat cats" and corporate excess maintained a stony silence.

Even the fact that News International, which owns the Sun and Times newspapers, paid no tax on profits of £779m in its last financial year, was not enough to stir Labour. Alistair Darling, the party's City spokesman, brushed aside the party's apparent lack of interest, explaining that "you must never design a tax system to get at one person. It is a matter of fundamental principle".

Cynics pointed to the growing rapprochement between Mr Murdoch and a Labour leadership anxious to ensure that the media baron's titles do not exhibit the same hostility in the general election as they did in 1992. The Sun has always boasted that it was the paper "not won't" for the Tories.

The two sides' courtship has seen Mr Blair speak at an internal conference for senior executives of Mr Murdoch's empire in Australia, where the Labour leader was roundly

praised by his host. When News International's *Today* newspaper closed, Mr Blair penned an article exhorting its readers to switch to its Sun stablemate.

However, following fresh disclosures in the Independent that deals in three of News International's obscure "finance" companies had produced profits of £340m in the year to June 1994 but attracted no tax, some Labour MPs have read enough.

A Commons early-day motion tabled by Harry Cohen, MP for Leyton, and supported by nine of his colleagues, registers "displeasure" at only £11.74m going to the Inland Revenue in the last 10 years, and "notes that this represents a rate of 1.2 per cent, when corporation tax is set at 33 per cent... and most companies, including News International's competitors, pay over 20 per cent".

The motion says: "This House... considers that News International have abused tax avoidance arrangements by amongst other complex transactions using letter-box companies in off-shore tax havens, and calls upon the Chancellor and the courts to close these loopholes."

Its signatories are predominantly, but by no means all, from the left-wing Campaign Group of MPs. They include Tony Banks, Jeremy Corbyn, Ken Livingstone, Eddie Loyden and Dennis Skinner. However, they are joined by non-Campaign members Maria Fyfe, Gerry Steinberg and Mike Hall. Mr Hall sits on the influential Public Accounts Committee.

## Allied Irish Banks buys Govett arm

JOHN WILLCOCK Financial Correspondent

Allied Irish Banks has agreed to buy John Govett Group from Govett & Co for £101m, making the bank the largest Irish fund manager.

AIB takes 75 per cent of the equity and will eventually concentrate all its existing fund management in the new company - John Govett Holdings. The management team at John Govett gets a 20 per cent stake and Govett Oriental Investment Trust will take the remaining 5 per cent.

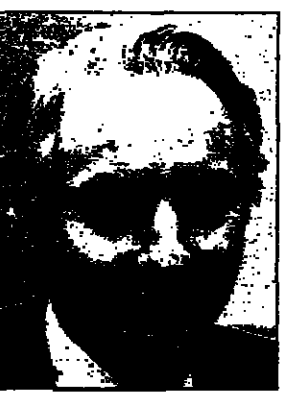
While John Govett is well known for its unit and investment trusts, as well as operations in the Far East, its parent has been troubled by a series of

law suits in the US. Yesterday, Govett renamed itself London Pacific Fund, and said it was retaining its London quote despite doing most of its business in New York.

Analysts thought the price AIB paid for John Govett was cheap on a historic price earnings ratio of 10.7. The price also represented 3.4 per cent of the £3bn in funds under management. This compares with 15.4 times and 4.2 per cent respectively for Commerzbank's acquisition this year of Jupiter Tyndall.

Analysts warned, however, that John Govett's margins could be eroded, thus hitting earnings. AIB's shares slipped 1p to 365p while Govett's put on 22p to 242p.

## Merger speculation lifts GUS



Moving in at GUS: Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale

Almost £200m was added to the stock market value of Great Universal Stores yesterday as board changes at Britain's largest mail-order company triggered speculation that it was poised to merge with the retailing house Next, writes Nigel Cope.

Sparkling the excitement was the announcement that Lord Wolfson of Marylebone, who is 68, will step down as chairman of GUS next summer and be succeeded by his cousin, Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, who is currently chairman of Next. GUS's deputy chairman,

Richard Pugh, moved swiftly to dampen merger hopes. He said last night: "We have no present interest in any merger. I can't see a great advantage in it."

GUS shares closed 18p higher at 632p. Next rose 5p to 449p.

Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale's appointment was welcomed in the City, which has become frustrated by the lack of openness and caution at GUS. One analyst said: "It is brilliant news. The mail order business needs to be modernised and it is good that they have got someone who has a history of turning things round."

With the chief executive, David Jones, Lord Wolfson has overseen a dramatic revival at Next, on the brink of collapse a few years ago. It is now one of the best-performing retailers.

He will become deputy chairman of GUS next April and chairman in September. He will stay on the Next board as non-executive chairman.

GUS announced healthy profits yesterday, boosted by a good performance from Burberry. Pre-tax profits for the six months to September were up 5 per cent to £237m. Sales were up slightly at £1.2bn.

## T&N awaits \$185m ruling

MAGNUS GRIMOND

An asbestosis claim for \$185m (£116m) against T&N, the UK automotive engineering group, was last night hanging on the judgment of a US jury.

The case is one of the biggest, dating back to the days when, as Turner & Newall, the company was the world's biggest supplier of asbestos. It involves material installed in 1959 in the 60-storey Chase Manhattan Plaza, the New York headquarters of the bank of the same name.

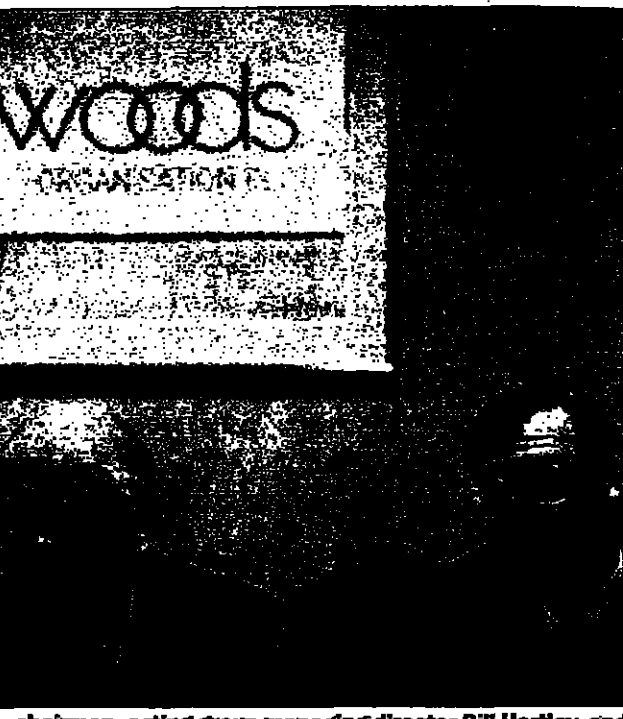
In what is likely to be taken as a precedent for other cases, the jury was sent out at midday on Wednesday and was still deliberating when the court reconvened early yesterday. But the shares bounced 10p to 130p on optimism that T&N may not have to pay the full amount after a much larger claim was settled at a fraction of the previous estimated liability.

A \$600m suit brought against 37 defendants, including T&N,

has resulted in the UK group settling for £6.5m, against earlier estimates that it might have to pay up to \$50m. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey had brought the case over asbestos installed in the three New York airports under its control and its headquarters in the World Trade Center.

In the Chase Manhattan case, \$75m in damages and a further \$110m in punitive damages are being sought. The bank has claimed that T&N knew or should have known that the product was dangerous and failed to warn the occupants. In its defence, the British company argued that Chase had given assurances to employees, customers and clients that the building, which remains in use, was safe.

Shares in T&N have slumped from a high of 260p in 1994 after it stunned the market a year ago by announcing it would be forced to make an additional \$100m provision to cover asbestosis claims.



Executive pool (left to right): Leonard van Geest, Littlewoods chairman, acting group managing director Bill Hartley, and finance director Jim Michie at yesterday's egn in which the £1.2bn bid from ex-chief executive Barry Dale was voted out

## Moore's reject Littlewoods bid

NIGEL COPE

The Moore's family re-exerted its grip on the Littlewoods empire yesterday when it voted against a £1.2bn offer for the company from its former chief executive, Barry Dale.

At an emergency meeting held on an icy day in Liverpool, the 32 family shareholders voted not to open the company's books to Mr Dale.

The family also overturned a resolution that would have encouraged other bidders to come forward.

Board members voted by an overwhelming majority to discourage any other offers and urged them to be withdrawn in order to end uncertainty.

Littlewoods' chairman, Leonard van Geest, said after the meeting: "The outcome of the meeting shows that shareholders have strongly supported the board's advice to reject the Bidco [Barry Dale] approach."

The voting at today's meeting also clearly shows that shareholders have no immediate intention that the company

should be sold. The board now expects other potential offers to recognise the wishes of shareholders and not prolong the period of uncertainty generated by Bidco's approach.

Commenting on the defeat, Mr Dale said: "The result was not surprising but we remain actively interested and we'll see what happens."

The vote is also a blow to Sir David Alliance's £1.1bn offer for the group, which he made in conjunction with Iceland, the frozen food retailer. It was a tense day on Mersey-

side, where the company is one of the most prominent employers. As the crunch meeting was going on in the sixth-floor boardroom it was business as usual at Littlewoods' 15-storey HQ. Hundreds of visitors came and went at the stainless steel and blue glass monolith.

Mr Van Geest would not rule out a stock market flotation but said the family would complete a review of options. "We are talking about some very important issues," he said. "Let's not rush them and let's not try and put a time scale on it."

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## business

## Auditors seek an escape route from retribution



## COMMENT

Audit fees are not as poor as most accountants would have you believe, but for many partners they no longer justify the risk of being held liable for somebody else's cock-ups.

The 1980s made the business of auditing, never particularly respected outside the narrow world of accountancy, into a positively disreputable one. Rightly or wrongly, auditors were held partly responsible for the state of fraudulent insolvencies that began to roll in from the mid-1980s onwards.

Why didn't the auditors spot the problems, how is it possible for a company to be given a clean audit only to go bust a few months later, and what do we pay these people for if not to give fair warning that all is not as it seems, was the general thrust of the criticism? The legacy is a string of legal actions for alleged negligence, some of them of gigantic proportions.

In the hunt for retribution and compensation, auditors are a soft and easy target. The 150 former and current partners of Brierley Hamlyn who face financial ruin following a £105m High Court judgment may have captured headlines, but the amount is a flea-bite compared with others waiting in the wings. The scramble among big firms towards the haven of limited liability reinforces the impression of highly-paid professionals attempting to wriggle out of their obligations. Always there when lucrative fees are in the offing, however disreputable the client, it is hard to see these people for dust once the balloon goes up. In some cases the audit firms are doubly open to criticism since by association they lend credibility and respectability to those who might otherwise be considered suspect.

While all this is fair enough comment, however, it is equally reasonable for the big firms to seek ways of limiting exposure to the "nuclear" claim. The partnership structure, in this country at least, positively attracts the big negligence law suit since the potential pot of damages is so large – not only the assets of the firm can be claimed, but those of any employee with partnership status, too. Audit fees are not as poor as most accountants would have you believe, but for many partners they no longer justify the risk of being held liable for somebody else's cock-ups.

Limiting the liability without surrendering the considerable tax benefits of partnership is a far from easy thing, however. In other countries, such as the US, partnerships can have their cake and eat it; they can keep the tax and other benefits of partnership and limit their liability at the same time. One solution, therefore, is to go offshore. As KPMG appears to have acknowledged in rejecting it, the problem with this approach is that it looks suspicious.

Though some territories such as the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man have long had their arrangements accepted by the British courts, it is difficult to escape the view that taking this step looks like running away. Even those now understood to be considering such an approach are keen to point out that they want none of the tax advantages associated with such havens for fear that they would diminish their standing. Furthermore, it is by no means clear the British

courts would in practice accept such a cosmetic limit on liability.

Reform of the law of joint and several liability to allow limited partnership is the obvious long-term solution, but whether sympathy for the plight of accountants and lawyers is sufficient to create the parliamentary time for it seems open to question. In the meantime, accountants need to do far more to rehabilitate the whole process of audit. Public expectations of what auditors do and what can be expected of them may be unrealistically high, but by the same count, past failures are so dramatic that the scope for improvement must still be considerable. If accountants are to get the privilege of limited liability, they should also be willing to take on board the extra burden of ensuring that companies have adequate internal controls – a Cadbury recommendation which most auditors are resisting fiercely.

## For Lord Wolfson read Lord Wolfson

On the face of it, the management succession announced yesterday by Great Universal Stores was just what you would expect from a family business. One Lord Wolfson, 68, steps down as chairman. Another Lord Wolfson (his 59-year-old cousin) steps up to take over the family firm. Surely this is a classic example of a fuddy-duddy, nepo-

tistic business dynasty ignoring the needs and wishes of external shareholders and looking after its own? Not quite.

While it is true that the board did not exactly scour the globe for an external candidate and says it voted unanimously for Wolfson, there are a number of things that make this case different. First GUS has done well to keep the business in the family this long. Many business dynasties founder when they reach the third generation as they run out of plausible candidates to run the company. Younger members have different agendas, or want to cash in their stake. One need look no further than the strife-ridden Littlewoods for an example of what can go wrong.

Apsley's, the jeweller, has also fallen out of family control after 200 years. Pilkington is no longer run by a Pilkington. Sainsbury's is a rare example of a large public company that has flourished under family ownership, though it, too, has had problems recently. The remarkable thing about GUS, founded in the early part of the century, is that it has lumbered on quite nicely and in its latest Lord Wolfson has found a third generation who is, if anything, more highly regarded than his predecessors.

Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale to give him his full title, is clearly not the family duffer. He spent 18 years at GUS and became chairman of its key mail-order business before leaving in 1978. He was later chief of staff at the political office of 10 Downing Street

for six years. More recently he has overseen the recovery of Next, the once-stricken high street retailer where he is chairman.

He is also a more open, City-friendly type. You never know, shareholders might actually find out what is going on in this notoriously uncommunicative company once he gets into the chair. His appointment could also mark a change of direction for GUS.

Under Sir Isaac who bought a controlling stake in the company in the 1930s, GUS was an aggressive takeover operator. Under the current chairman it has been a more cautious animal, edging up profits each year and squirreling away a £1bn cash pile. It has also ignored the City, only recently bowing to pressure to enfranchise its non-voting shares. Remarkably, its first analysts meeting was just three years ago and even then told the audience precious little.

Things could be about to change.

## Cryptic George keeps City guessing

Attempting to reading meaning into what Eddie George says seems to have become the latest version of Kremlinology. It should perhaps be called Bankology. Whether his comments to the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee means he is going to oppose a base rate cut at his meeting with the Chancellor next week is still anyone's guess, however.

## MPs attack Bank over Barings collapse

PAUL WALLACE and JOHN EISENHAMMER

The Bank of England came under renewed attack yesterday over its handling of the Barings affair from the influential Treasury Select Committee.

Highlighting concerns about weaknesses exposed in the Bank's supervision, the committee said it intended to reopen its Barings inquiry in the new year. This is expected to involve calling some of the most senior former Barings executives to give evidence.

Sir Thomas Arnold, the Conservative chairman of the select committee, said the investigation would focus on the "the apparent discrepancy" between the findings of the Singapore investigation into Barings and the one conducted by the Bank of England's Board of Banking Supervision.

In a hard-hitting statement to Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, who was giving evidence to the committee on the Budget, Sir Thomas said: "We are concerned that the Bank has allowed some institutions to operate within an 'informal' control system and taken at face value management platitudes about the sources of their profit without the rigorous scrutiny we believe necessary."

He reiterated the committee's view that the improvement it wished to see in banking supervision might require stripping the Bank of England of its supervisory responsibilities and the establishment of "a new, separate body with enhanced powers and a more thorough approach to its work."

Eddie George said he now regretted using the word "whitchunt" in the previous hearing over the summer. He said the Bank would be providing a report to the Board of Banking Supervision before the end of the year outlining the actions already taken to implement the 17 recommendations set out in the report. Arthur Andersen, the management consultant, has been called in by the Bank to suggest ways of improving its supervisory systems.

Sir Thomas expressed the committee's concern that "while the Board of Banking Supervision report into the collapse of Barings was content to criticise senior Barings managers for failing to establish effective controls, the report of the Singapore authorities appears to go much further and suggests certain managers may have covered up for Mr. Leeson."

The Singapore report is particularly critical of the role played by Peter Norris, the former head of Barings investment banking, accusing him of covering up vital warning signs that might have prevented the collapse of the bank under nearly £900m of Nick Leeson's derivatives trading losses.

Sir Thomas said this was "a far cry from blaming the debacle on the activities of one sole rogue trader." Some 23 former Barings executives are currently under investigation by the Securities and Futures Authority, the City watchdog.

Peter Baring, former chairman, Andrew Luckey, former deputy chairman who is still working at Barings as a consultant, and Mr Norris are expected to head the list of those called before the committee. This would be the first time they have given evidence in public about the crash.

But legal sources last night cast doubt on whether some of the executives would appear voluntarily. The committee would then have to ask the House to summon the executives to appear before it.

Early last month, Sir Thomas called for a Parliamentary debate on the Barings crash and the Bank of England's role. It appears that the Government has not found time for the debate, and this has persuaded the Treasury committee to intensify its inquiry.

Sir Thomas also drew attention to the fact that the Singapore report had, in a venomous six-page appendix, complained that its investigators in London had faced a lack of co-operation, and in some cases deliberate obstruction, by the Bank of England.



Andrew Thomas, Greenalls' chairman and chief executive (left), and Peter Greenall, managing director, yesterday announced that profits have passed £100m for the first time. Analysts believe Greenalls shares could become a constituent of the FT-SE 100 index next year. The company's market value has almost quadrupled to nearly £1.6bn since it pulled out of brewing six years ago to concentrate on pub retailing and leisure activities. Profits in the year to 29 September rose from £75m to £100.5m. Investment Column, page 26

Photograph: Edward Webb

## Biotech thanks investors for staying

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Keith McCullagh, chief executive of British Biotech, yesterday thanked institutional investors for staying with the company over the long term – just days after two of his boardroom colleagues made a £3.2m short-term profit on share sales.

But Mr McCullagh did not appear embarrassed by the ac-

tion of his fellow directors. He vigorously defended their actions, denying that they showed any lack of commitment to the company.

James Noble, finance director, made a profit of £1.7m and Peter Lewis, head of research and development, pocketed £1.5m on Monday when they sold shares resulting from the exercise of options. The move

came after a 70 per cent jump in the shares following the release of initial trial results for marimastat, one of the company's drugs.

Now under development, the treatment could be a breakthrough in the treatment of cancer. Mr McCullagh suggested yesterday the drug could have a market worth £1.8bn.

He said the board was "en-

tirely comfortable" with the commitment of the two men involved in cashing in options. Both were highly talented individuals.

"They are both probably the most talented executives in their field today. It is in large part due to them that we are in the strong position we are in today," he said. Part of their remuneration comes through a

long-term share option scheme. Mr McCullagh said at a briefing given by the National Association of Pension Funds.

The scheme has been discussed and approved by the two main institutional investor bodies, the NAPF and the Association of British Insurers, as well as being cleared by shareholders at annual general meetings.

## British Gas delay thwarted

MARY FAGAN  
Industrial Correspondent

The Government yesterday thwarted attempts by British Gas to delay competition in the domestic gas market, demanding that the industry stick to a start date of 1 April next year.

Tim Eggar, minister for energy and industry, insisted at a meeting yesterday that British Gas and its rivals work together to resolve any potential problems with computers or billing. One industry source who attended the talks said: "It was an

extremely forcefully led meeting by Mr Eggar."

It is understood that there may be rationing of the number of people who can transfer from British Gas per day in the initial stages, but only as a last resort. The Government may appoint a co-ordinator to ensure smooth progress in the run-up to the deadline.

The key meeting was called by the minister following concerns among British Gas's competitors that the company was deliberately dragging its feet. Clare Spottiswoode, the indus-

try watchdog, who also attended the meeting, is also thought to have become irritated by the company's attitude.

The importance of the issue was underlined by the decision of Cedric Brown, British Gas's chief executive, to attend the meeting. He was accompanied by Harry Moulson, managing director of the British Gas pipeline arm, Transco. Transco has argued that the systems required to allow multiple competitors into the marketplace needed more time for testing. Industry View, page 26

## Takeover nets Cluff £2.5m

Algy Cluff, founder and chairman of Cluff Resources, stands to gain £2.5m from shares and options following the launch by Ashanti Goldfields of an agreed bid for the goldmining group, writes Mary Fagan.

The proposed takeover, valuing Cluff Resources at £80m, ends weeks of speculation over the future of the company. Hutchison Whampoa of Hong Kong yesterday sold its 26.6 per cent stake to Ashanti for £21m. Other big shareholders include Provident Mutual Life and Echo Bay of the US.

Mr Cluff said: "It's sad to be

mugged, but that is capitalism for you. It is very sad to lose independence, having done so well after starting in what were very difficult circumstances."

He added: "They are paying a fair price. The offer clearly vindicates the considerable effort we have invested in Africa over the years."

The offer is one new Ashanti share for every 12 Cluff shares with a full cash alternative of 105p. The price represents a premium of 14 per cent over the middle market value on Wednesday. Cluff's shares rose 12p to 104p.

## Mr Martin Landau – apology

In the item "Gowrie gets his teeth into the property world" in the City Diary on 26 October we referred to Mr Martin Landau, the Deputy Chairman of Development Securities Plc. We regret the item's suggestion that Mr Landau was to blame for the loss which the Church Commissioners suffered in connection with a speculative development in Kent. We now accept that the suggestion was untrue and we apologise to Mr Landau.

## 'Gambler' holds 25% stake in Christies

DAVID HELLIER

Joseph Lewis, the man who has taken his stake in Christies, the fine art auction house, to more than 25 per cent this week, is known to his friends as an enthusiastic gambler. "He just loves gambling. He'd bet on two flies climbing up a wall," one friend said yesterday.

He is said to be a heavy investor in the currency markets, where he takes large speculative positions and he is also said to be keen on betting on American football. Some of his friends say he is wealthier than the legendary currency speculator, George Soros.

Christies yesterday confirmed that Mr Lewis had increased his stake in the company to 25.32 per cent and later said it was in regular contact with its largest shareholder.

Peter Blythe, finance director, said Christies was in regular contact with all its large shareholders, including Mr Lewis.

Asked if Mr Lewis's investment had put the company on bid, Mr Blythe referred to a statement made recently by one of Mr Lewis's representatives. This, he said, had suggested his investment was a friendly, rather than unfriendly, one.

"He has bought over the last 18 months and the share price is higher now than for most of that period," Mr Blythe said.

Mr Lewis, who is London-born but Bahamas-based, has added 12 million shares to his 41.5 million holding in the past week. When he first started buying shares in Christies, he picked them up at around 150p through the small London brokers, Hargreave Hale. Yesterday they traded unchanged at 213p.

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## market report/shares

TAKING STOCK

## DATA BANK

FT-SE 100

3,639.5 -23.3

FT-SE 250

3,953.9 -5.0

FT-SE 350

1,804.7 -0.6

SEAO VOLUME

750.3m shares

27,255 bargains

GIRs Index

96.03 -0.49

SHARE SPOTLIGHT

100 index ending 23.3 points

lower at 3,639.5. Even New

York, which has on so many

occasions offered support, failed

to oblige, with the Dow Jones

Average showing acute signs of

over-exuberance. High-tech

stocks in New York were par-

ticularly hard hit with UNET,

the buyer of Unipalm, and

Netscape under pressure.

Eddie George, Governor of

the Bank of England, added to

## Fears of competition from Internet take toll on Reed

## MARKET REPORT

## DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year



Reed International, the publishing group, felt the impact of the Internet, the world-wide computer network. Shares of the Anglo-Dutch giant tumbled 46p to 999p as *Forbes*, the US business magazine, drew attention to the competition many of Reed's more obscure, but lucrative, academic and business magazines could suffer from Internet competition.

The publishing setback set the tone for a lacklustre stock market session with the FT-SE 100 index ending 23.3 points lower at 3,639.5. Even New York, which has on so many occasions offered support, failed to oblige, with the Dow Jones Average showing acute signs of over-exuberance. High-tech stocks in New York were particularly hard hit with UNET, the buyer of Unipalm, and Netscape under pressure.

Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, added to

the uncertainty with his hint to one of the parliamentary select committees that he would be reluctant to go along with an interest rate cut.

HSBC, the banking giant that embraces Midland Bank, was ruffled by rumours that a Japanese institution, said to be an insurance group, was trying to place a large line of stock, possibly more than 10 million shares, in Hong Kong.

In London, HSBC shaded to 991p and Standard Chartered, as takeover hopes dwindled and more than 6 million shares hovered, lost 22p to 566p. Other banks edged lower.

British Gas was the subject of a Merrill Lynch placing of 10 million shares with stories of a further 10 million overhang adding to the discomfort. The sale, thought to be institutional, left the shares 3.5p lower at 229p. BT remained under pressure falling 6p to 346p, lowest since 1992.

The belligerent Oriel programme over prices and the seemingly ever-increasing competition to what is, in effect, a staid old player in the telecommunications business, continued to take their toll.

Footsie again undermined shares, off a further 6p to 211p. Among other Footsie casualties Arjo Wiggins Appleton fell 7.5p to 158.5p and De La Rue 3p to 652p.

Airtours, the holidays group that has been under intense pressure on worries of a profits collapse, jumped 17p to 338p on talk the US holiday business, Carnival Cruise Lines, is hovering.

Poor figures have been signalled by Airtours which, like the rest of the packaged holiday industry, has been hit by the sharp fall in demand for overseas holidays. Around £58m against £75.5m is the popular guess when it reports next week. But bears of the shares are suggesting the figures could be much lower.

First Choice, the other leading quoted tour operator that Airtours failed to acquire after a fierce takeover battle, gained 6p to 62p in sympathy. The theory is that Carnival wants to absorb a UK tour operator and is looking at Airtours, because of its growing cruise business.

T&N, the car components group, gained 10p to 130p after it settled a US asbestos claim at £6.5m, much lower than expected. It had been sued for £30m. But T&N's success is dwarfed by the looming £185m action by Chase Manhattan Bank where a jury verdict is expected any day.

Chiff Resources, the gold miner, at last produced a bidder - Astanti Goldfields which is prepared to offer £80m in shares. It already has 26.6 per cent of its target, picking up Hutchison Whampoa's stake.

But Wensum, the clothing group that has attracted intense takeover speculation, tumbled 10p to 137p, following its denial of any merger talks.

The shares are still, however, comfortably above their year's low.

Megalomedia, the latest Saatchi vehicle, continued its remarkable progress on AIM, closing up 20p at 114p after

121p. Pet City, placed at 300p, ended at 355p.

The next AIM recruits could include Dmatak, an Israeli computer group, and CPS, a Luxembourg property services group.

Proteas, the computer-linked drugs group, demonstrated the vulnerability of the bio-babes when it said a deal involving DNA-binding drug had hit a hitch. The group still expects to produce five revenue-earning agreements by the end of its current financial year, to March. The shares displayed their unease, tumbling 23p to 126p.

Pison, the hand-held computer group, staged a modest rally, up 25p to 790p. A new market-maker in the shares, to take over from NatWest Securities, is expected to be announced next week. If Pison can produce a replacement it should avoid being relegated to the SEAT share market.

Flare Group, the former J Hewitt & Son, gained 12p to 116p as the stock market braced itself for bad action. The company is 27 per cent owned by Ian Gowie Smith (ex-Medeva and now involved in the suspended Black & Edgington) and David Lees. It is thought to be firing on all cylinders and could hit £800,000 profit for the year, although there is a danger of a big tax charge eroding earnings. Deals are on the way. One has fallen down but another is near.

SWE making timber frame structures for houses and spiral staircases, shaded to 12p. It is raising £1.1m through a rights issue underwritten by stockbroker Ellis & Partners. Alan Chamberlain, ex-Elleman Lines, and corporate financier Stephen Barclay have joined the board.

## Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details of company share prices are available on Ex at Unilever Securities Market's Superfund on Parly Paid pm Nil Paid Shares.

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## Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol/100	Stock	Vol/100	Stock	Vol/100
British Gas	20000.00	General Elect.	12000.00	S&P Baudem	8000.00
BT	17000.00	Carson	12000.00	BP	4000.00
Heron	10000.00	Volvo	10000.00	BTI	4000.00
T&N	10000.00	Unilever	10000.00	Castrol	4000.00
Blue Circle	10000.00	GLS	9000.00	Wool	4000.00

## FT-SE 100 index hour by hour

Open	High	Low	Close	Change
11.00	3652.7	3652.7	3652.7	0.0
12.00	3652.7	3652.7	3652.7	0.0
13.00	3652.7	3652.7	3652.7	0.0
14.00	3652.7	3652.7	3652.7	0.0
15.00	3652.7	3652.7	3652.7	0.0

## RETAILERS, FOOD

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
British Telecom	40.00	+0.50	Telecom	40.00	+0.50
BT	40.00	+0.50	Telecom	40.00	+0.50
BT	40.00	+0.50	Telecom	40.00	+0.50
BT	40.00	+0.50	Telecom	40.00	+0.50

## RETAILERS, GENERAL

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## PHARMACEUTICALS

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## PRINTING &amp; PAPER

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## PROPERTY

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## SPIRITS, WINES &amp; CIGARS

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## WATER

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## SUPPORT SERVICES

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## RIGHTS ISSUES

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## RECENT ISSUES

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## Government Securities

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## SHORTS

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## MEDIUMS

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## LONGS

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## INDEX-LINKED

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## UNDATED

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## GAS DISTRIBUTION

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## HEALTH CARE

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

## FOOD MANUFACTURERS

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Asda	40.00	+0.50	Waitrose	40.00	+0.50
Boys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50
Co-op	40.00	+0.50	John Lewis	40.00	+0.50
Currys	40.00	+0.50	Debenhams	40.00	+0.50

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Foreign Exchange Rates

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Spot 1 month 3 months

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Canada 12078 94-11 94-13

Germany 22268 94-47 95-29

France 29427 94-59 94-59

Japan 29427 94-59 94-59

Spain 15000 94-57 94-57

Italy 13284 94-58 94-58

Belgium 15396 94-58 94-58

Denmark 83889 94-58 94-58

Netherlands 24332 94-57 94-58

Sweden 12789 94-58 94-58

Norway 52481 94-58 94-58

Switzerland 20003 94-58 94-58

Australia 17054 94-58 94-58

New Zealand 10384 94-58 94-58

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## sport

CHAMPIONS' LEAGUE VERDICT: Dutch confirm their class while England's representative draws strength from a poor campaign

## Ajax emerge as the age's greatest team

Now the British are departed (contribution: one win, five dismissals and a punch-up) the Champions' League is distilled to an elite octet. That, at least, is the theory. In practice Uefa, the governing body of European football, appears to have a problem in the quality control department. As the competition reaches the knock-out stage there is one outstanding team, a contender, a pretender and five likely make-weights.

Ajax are the class act. The holders completed a European Cup record 17-match unbeaten run with their 4-0 dissection of Ferencvaros on Wednesday night, surpassing the achievement of their great forerunners, the Rinus Michels team of Johan Cruyff and Neeskens.

They were impressive enough last year, defeating Milan three times, including the final. However, the retirement of Frank Rijkaard looked as if it would leave a significant void, especially as one potential replacement, Clarence Seedorf, moved on to Sampdoria.

Instead the Dutch club have become, if anything, better. As well as winning five of six Champions' League matches they are unbeaten at home, winning 14 of 15 league games. Their domestic dominance is total. Only Feyenoord, in a cup game, beat them last year. World Soccer magazine's Dutch team of the season was an Ajax XI. This hegemony gives the lie to Rangers' complaints that they cannot prosper in Europe until they are stretched in Scotland.

While the defence remains as tight as ever (they have conceded seven goals all season) Louis van Gaal, the coach, has created a yet more expansive attacking style which has garnered 72 goals. They come from everywhere with a dozen different scorers. Patrick Kluivert, still only 19, is supported by Nigeria's Finidi George on one wing and the cov-

Glenn Moore considers Van Gaal's side capable of surpassing the Cruyff vintage

eted Marc Overmars on the other. The Finn Jari Litmanen plays behind Kluivert and the De Boer twins. Frank and Ronald, chip in from all manner of places. When Kluivert is rested another teenager, Nwankwo Kanu steps in. All the while Danny Blind, the side's current elder statesman, marshals from the back.

Ajax's best performance this season was the one in Madrid when Real were flattered to lose 2-0. The match demonstrated the fluidity of Ajax's movement – and the gulf the Spanish champions need to bridge if they are to claim a seventh European crown. Real's pretensions will be severely tested by Juventus in the quarter-finals.

Like Madrid, the Italian champions have faltered in their domestic league, and they also lost at home in Europe, to Borussia Dortmund. If that form suggests their wins over Rangers said more about their opponents' weaknesses than Juventus's strengths – like Barcelona's dismantling of Manchester United last season – it is misleading. Juventus, unlike Barcelona, are a team in harmony with themselves. The Dortmund result came after they had already qualified and the disparity with their Serie A performances merely emphasises the priority placed on the European Cup.

Whoever wins will meet Spartak Moscow or Nantes in the semi-final. The Russians have impressed but their side is unlikely to remain intact until March. Oleg Romanstev, the coach, has already stepped down, while Viktor Onopko is said to be bound for Spain. Should Sergei Yuran, Yuri Nikiforov and others be lured elsewhere, they will struggle even to beat an ordinary Nantes side.

The other semi-final should

be between Ajax and either Panathinaikos or Legia Warsaw. Neither prospect will frighten the Dutch. All of which underlines how hard it is to place this Ajax side in perspective. Last week they struggled to beat a 10-man Gremio to win the World Club Championship, only doing so on penalties. However, the pitch was awful, the players were tired and lacked motivation.

Afterwards Van Gaal wisely resisted comparisons with the Cruyff generation, who were world club champions in 1972. But he did add: "We remember that team as fantastic. Maybe in 20 years' time people will speak the same way about us."

It is increasingly likely. The Champions' League format, designed under pressure from giants such as Milan and Barcelona, has helped a club like Ajax most. The financial rewards have helped them resist offers for the likes of Overmars and, although Seedorf left, they replaced him with the Brazilian, Marcio Santos.

And they will get better. With Santos injured, Blind, at 34, is the only player over 25 in the side. As BBC TV's *Dreaming of Ajax* programme illustrated, there are more young players emerging, the latest being the 19-year-old Nordin Wooter.

With a new stadium ready for next season the club will at last have an arena to match its football, and another reason to persuade its best players to stay. The last great Ajax side was broken up when Barcelona bought Cruyff and Neeskens. This one is less dependent on a few individuals, and better equipped to retain its stars. They could be champions for years.

EUROPEAN CUP Quarter-finals First leg (8 March) Legia Warsaw v Juventus; Borussia Dortmund v Ajax; Bayern Munich v Real Madrid; Arsenal v Lazio. Second leg (22 March) Arsenal v Bayern Munich; Ajax v Borussia Dortmund; Juventus v Legia Warsaw; Real Madrid v Arsenal. Quarter-finals First leg (29 March) Ajax v Juventus; Arsenal v Borussia Dortmund; Bayern Munich v Lazio; Real Madrid v Legia Warsaw. Second leg (5 April) Arsenal v Bayern Munich; Ajax v Borussia Dortmund; Juventus v Legia Warsaw; Real Madrid v Arsenal. Semi-finals First leg (12 April) Ajax v Real Madrid; Arsenal v Borussia Dortmund; Bayern Munich v Lazio; Real Madrid v Legia Warsaw. Second leg (19 April) Arsenal v Bayern Munich; Ajax v Real Madrid; Juventus v Borussia Dortmund; Real Madrid v Legia Warsaw. Final (26 May) Ajax v Arsenal.

## Ajax's results so far this season

World Club Championships (Tokyo)  
Gremio (Brazil) 0-0 (Ajax won on penalties)  
European Cup Winners' Cup  
First Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Second Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Third Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Fourth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Fifth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Sixth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Seventh Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Eighth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Ninth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Tenth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Eleventh Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Twelfth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Thirteenth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Fourteenth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Fifteenth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Sixteenth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Seventeenth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Eighteenth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Nineteenth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Twentieth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Twenty-first Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Twenty-second Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Twenty-third Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Twenty-fourth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Twenty-fifth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Twenty-sixth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Twenty-seventh Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Twenty-eighth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Twenty-ninth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)  
Thirtieth Round: Ajax 1-0 (Gremio)

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## SPORT

## On Monday: 24-page sports section

CRICKET: England batsmen unable to maintain interest on cloying surface that bowler DeFreitas belatedly finds is to his liking

## Thorpe thrives on damp ground

DEREK PRINGLE  
reports from Paarl  
England 263-8 v Boland

The supreme effort needed by the *voortrekkers* to breach the lofty Drakenstein mountains that flank this pleasant ground made them a determined and hardy bunch, not given to failure. Although these are qualities Michael Atherton has been preaching and practising since assuming the England captaincy, his team do not seem able to follow their leader.

Atherton was not playing yes-

## Paarl scoreboard

(First day of four; England won toss)

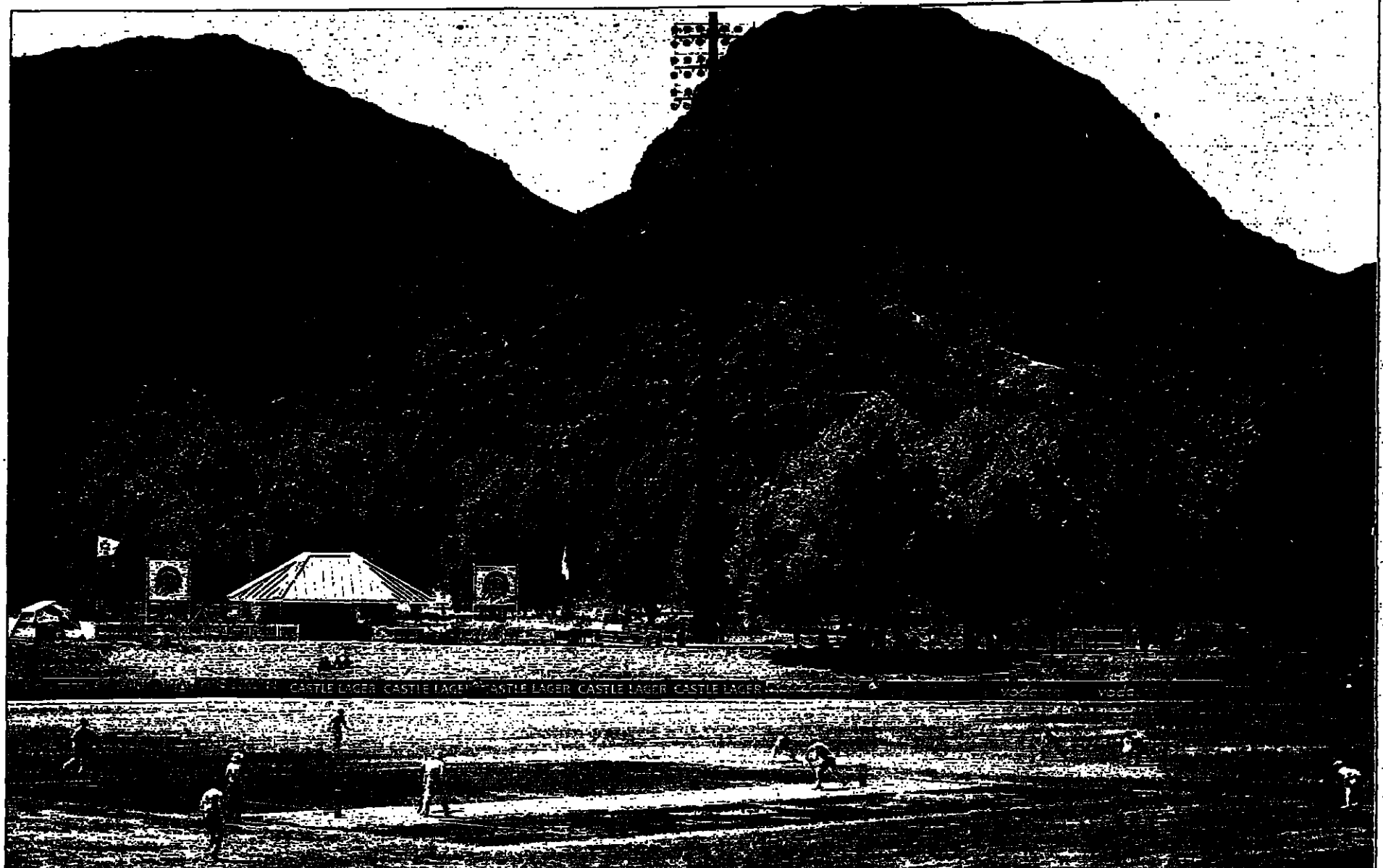
ENGLAND - First innings	
R A Smith b Stelling	39
A J Stewart b Stelling	36
J P Crawley c L M Germishuys b Drew	6
G A Thompson c L M Germishuys b Drew	56
G A Hick b Henderson	32
R G Russell not out	46
M Williamson c Stelling b Henderson	24
D Gough b Williamson	3
P J Martin c L M Germishuys	3
b DeFreitas	3
R K Bingham not out	9
Extras (b6, w1, nc3)	10
Total (after 8, 107 overs)	263
Runs: 5-54 2-74 3-113 4-160 5-180 6-217 7-224 8-233	
To bat: M C Birt	
Overlaid: (b) deFreitas 14-9-17-11; Williamson 17-3-65-2; Stelling 13-4-36-2; Henderson 25-13-65-2; Drew 28-4-77-2; BOLAND: L D Ferreira, B C Bagley, K C Jackson, T Lizzani, P Phipps, W F Stirling, T L M Germishuys, P A J DeFreitas, C W Henderson, C M Williamson, B J Drew.	
Umpires: M Begg and R Brooks.	

terday as England, after the thrilling stodge of last Monday, seemed unable to maintain interest on a pitch whose surface behaved like drying putty. Only Graham Thorpe and Jack Russell seemed intent on making the undemanding Boland bowlers work for their wickets, with Thorpe scoring 56 and Russell batting close to three hours for his 45.

This ground is only in its second first-class season. Last year the equivalent match here against New Zealand had to be abandoned, the umpires ruling the pitch too dangerous after several batsmen were struck in the throat. To prevent this happening, the groundsmen have taken to watering the pitch just before the start, and already this season two matches have been delayed because of its lavish use of the hosepipe.

If the surface was damp and sporty, it did not show, for the opening hostilities from Phil DeFreitas were muted, the Derbyshire man quickly opting for line and length after seeing Robin Smith bludgeoned his opening partner, the lanky Scharl Willoughby, for three quick boundaries.

Willoughby fed Smith's off-side repertoire as if it were a slot machine with a saucy smile and England raced to fifty in only 54 balls. But just as Smith promised his most fluent knock



Backdrop to Boland: England play out their first innings as the cricket is second best to the scenery at Paarl yesterday

Photograph: Clive Mason/Allsport

of the tour he was bowled for 39, by a beauty from Billy Stelling that seemed away off the pitch to hit off-stump.

The dismissal meant an early opportunity for John Crawley to show his many supporters here, many of whom are sporting closely cropped heads, that he has the kind of credentials, if not the most politically correct haircut, to make the England No 3 spot his own. All looked well,

but after cracking a cover drive for four to get off the mark, he was clumsily stumped by Louis-Mark Germishuys after hunching down the pitch to the off-spinner Brian Drew. After Mark Ramprakash's two-ball journey to the precipice of no return at the Wanderers, Crawley is set to play in the next Test, but not necessarily at No 3 where Smith may yet make a return.

Of all the possibilities, Alec

Stewart would probably be best suited to the role. His last Test fifty as an opening batsman for England was at Lord's against New Zealand, 16 months ago. His dismissal here, bowled driving loosely at Stelling, was almost identical to the one in England's second innings in Johannesburg, where Brian McMillan forced a similar stutter in his footwork, a flaw that, until corrected, is likely to be

ruthlessly exploited by South Africa's new-ball bowlers.

In fact, only a breezy half-century from his Surrey team-mate, Thorpe, and a hard-hit cameo from Graeme Hick, that included a cleanly struck straight six off Drew, prevented England from losing out completely to the scenery. However, when both were out in quick succession, Russell took over with his now renowned

crab-with-a-spade role, and the mountain view won out.

DeFreitas, who had one or two points to prove in this match, looked uninterested until the second new ball. With Mike Watkinson already gone for 24, brilliantly caught one-handed by a diving Stelling at short mid-off, he tormented England's tail with eight successive maidens. His only reward came after a disputable

dismissal for caught behind as his old Lancashire team-mate, Peter Martin, fended at a bounce. This allowed Richard Illingworth to apply a dollop of his own brand of Russell-like adhesive before the close as England ended the day 263-8. With the home side's spinners, Drew and Claude Henderson, sending down 63 of the 109 overs bowled, Illingworth will be in for an even stickier time today.

## McGhee's resignation angers Leicester

Football  
CATHERINE RILEY

Mark McGhee's appointment as manager of Wolves could be delayed following his controversial departure from Leicester yesterday. McGhee angered Leicester by rejecting a salary increase and resigning, along with his No 2, Colin Lee, and coach Mike Hickman.

Wolves—who could face a bill of up to £2.5m in legal fees, pay-offs to their former manager Graham Taylor and coach Steve Harrison, and signing-on

costs for the Leicester trio—may delay an announcement until after Sunday's trip to Luton.

"If he goes to Wolves I hope they get relegated," Steve Walsh, the club captain said. "All the players are very upset. They want to prove to Mark that what he's done is wrong. We feel that what's happened is a disgrace." Martin George, the Leicester chairman, said: "Mark would have been among the five best-paid managers in the country. The board went over backwards to try to get him to stay—to a level that made some of us doubt our own wisdom."

George applied for a High Court injunction in an attempt to stop Brian Little joining Aston Villa a year ago, and another court battle appears to be looming. Both the Football League and Football Association are to monitor the situation to see whether any regulations have been broken.

"I'm very disappointed with what has happened," George said. "We spent a long time and a great deal of effort trying to fulfil what we all wanted to do and we didn't achieve anything." Walsh, a Leicester player for 10 years, will take charge of

team affairs along with Chris Turner, Garry Parker and the youth team coach, David Nish, while Leicester begin seeking a new manager for the second time in a year.

Coventry City, who are currently at the bottom of the Premier League and £9m in debt, are to announce two new signings—one loan and one permanent—today. However, they have seen their bid to take Dave McPherson from Hearts on loan fall through due to the player's injury.

A group of six Manchester-

based millionaires have completed talks for a proposed takeover of Portsmouth. The consortium, led by businessman Warren Smith, held a meeting with the managing director, Martin Gregory, son of the club's owner, Jim Gregory, and the takeover is set to go through before Christmas.

"We have had a favourable response from Mr Gregory in our offer to acquire the club and we hope to be able to make a formal announcement by Monday of next week," said Smith. Birmingham are to request a personal hearing in an effort to clear their name after being

charged by the FA with misconduct over crowd trouble at their match against Millwall last month. The First Division side could face a substantial fine, or even closure of their ground if the charge is proved.

Fulham and Gillingham have both been charged with misconduct by the FA following their game on 25 November. Ten players were booked and two sent off, and the referee's report to the FA described the last 10 minutes of the Division Three match as "the most disgraceful exhibition by professional footballers I have ever seen."

## Crowds flock to see return of Ferguson

GUY HODGSON

Duncan Ferguson has come to the attention of the police before and last night he did so again. A broken line of yellow-bibbed officers was strung around Goodison Park looking like it wished it was elsewhere.

On an arctic night who could blame them? Not that the most famous release since The Beatles' "Free As A Bird" had done anything to merit their attention. Some 10,000 people had come to see

Ferguson make his return in an Everton shirt following his recent prison term. He was playing in a reserve match against Newcastle and the police were there to shepherd the players rather than put him under surveillance.

There is no doubt that Ferguson's 44-day jail sentence for assaulting a fellow player has elevated the Scottish striker to a status, in Evertonian minds, far beyond his feats on the field. "Duncan is innocent" tee-shirts have been doing a flourishing business.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2852, Friday 8 December By Phil Thursday's Solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

ACROSS

- Orsmen desultorily trapping one in a messy way (8)
- Bridge opponents left high-scoring card, causing tangle? (6)
- Cartel wrath less activated by major economic collapse? (4,6,5)
- What could be tatty, namely, book bound in red? (7)
- Privileged member with battling team getting runs (7)
- Leaders of Young Conservatives mobbing one in a gathering? It may lead to suspension (8)
- Weapon to ensnare love—a scowl (5)
- Editor, receiving pieces, has to edit (5)
- Keep principal one's investment in cash? (8)
- Electrical units—name used in SI here, possibly (7)
- Opposing a good one this month (7)
- How stupid can a board member be? (2,5,2,1,5)
- Come out to see them before inviting leader of gang in (6)
- Rash chap's going round Leeds after a riot (8)
- New women's group having split purpose? Not advisable (6)
- Distribution of beer to all that is easy to accept (9)
- Be naughty? Would I, likewise, be naughty ultimately? (7)
- Best securing high-class car would make you a happy character? (5)
- Company absorbed by one in rising Mediterranean city (7)
- A big star turning up for an Oscar? (5)
- Energy yonder—one source of luminosity in the heavens (8)
- Ale—one carrying bone disease (4,4)
- Another Phil? Means agonised discomfort, we hear (8)
- Struggling to retain European position with regard to a certain line (9)
- Make version of sharper English? (8)
- Forceful part of golf technique (7)
- Being cornered, runs, getting knocked about (7)
- First acceptable in revolutionary groups (6)
- Fool about with saltpetre (5)
- English article is superior to the French passage (5)

## Bates lets in Harding

The public feud between the chairman, Ken Bates, and the club's landlord, Matthew Harding, over the control of Chelsea moved behind closed doors at Stamford Bridge yesterday.

The club announced after a board meeting that the pair would lunch and sit together at tomorrow's home Premiership match against Newcastle. That implied Bates had agreed to lift the ban on Harding taking his seat in the directors' box and using the boardroom facilities, though both refused to comment before leaving the ground.

Now extensive discussions will take place in private to try to turn the public tussle into a lasting peace. A statement from the club added: "Discussions are proceeding on the best way forward

to finance and achieve Chelsea Football Club's future aspirations in the best interests of the club and its supporters."

Harding said only that it was a "very satisfactory meeting", while Bates said simply: "I'm very pleased with the way it went. There's nothing more I can say now."

The thaw followed a month-long dispute which had seen Harding refused permission even to park his car at Stamford Bridge. It was thought before the two-hour meeting that Harding, who has £26.5m invested in Chelsea, would offer to end the stand-off. He said: "I'm not going along looking for trouble, and I hope Ken isn't either. We haven't spoken for the best part of a month and I'm

looking forward to seeing him."

Harding had avoided a confrontation by watching games from the £5m North Stand he helped finance. He was, however, welcomed warmly into the directors' boxes at Leeds and Manchester United.

Bates, who has been suffering from pneumonia, has not attended a Chelsea game since 4 November. The pair had been at odds after Harding revealed he had resigned from the board of Chelsea Village, the club's parent company. He recognized that the row was a distraction from issues such as development of the south stand. Bates wants to accommodate a hotel, shops, offices and flats. Harding believes the investment in the stand should take precedence.

## Football's fastest goal claimed

GUY HODGSON AND LIZ SEARL

The statisticians will no doubt continue to disagree among themselves, but an Australian international by the name of Damian Mori has staked what could prove the best claim yet to the fastest goal in senior football history.

As Mori's team, Adelaide City, lined up for the start of Wednesday night's Australian National League match against Sydney United, the striker spotted the opposition goalkeeper, John Perosh, off his line. From the kick-off Bradley Hasell passed to Mori, who promptly lobbed the ball over Perosh and into the net. The goal was timed at four seconds.

Other goals have been recorded at four seconds (and indeed one at 3.5sec), but Mori may have the most legitimate claim as his goal was filmed, unlike most of those in the record books.

Adelaide City officials said they would send a copy of the film to the Guinness Book of Records, which currently lists four goals, all scored in six seconds, as the fastest in history: Albert Mundy (Aldershot v Hartlepool, 1958), Barrie Jones (Newport v Torquay, 1962), Keith Smith (Crystal Palace v Derby, 1964) and Tommy Langley (Queen's Park Rangers v Bolton, 1980).

One other notable goal was recorded at six seconds, but the scorer is probably glad that his name does not appear in most record books: Pat Kruse's strike after six seconds while playing for Torquay against Cambridge in 1977 is believed to be the fastest own goal in history.

In fact most statisticians agree that the fastest goal of all time was scored by Colin Cowperthwaite, who found the net after 3.5sec playing for Barrow against Kettering Town in 1979. There are also two instances in professional football of goals

said to have been scored after only four seconds. The match referee confirmed that time for Jim Fryatt's goal for Bradford Park Avenue against Tranmere in 1964, while off-pitch observers also recorded four seconds for Malcolm Macdonald's job for Newcastle United in a friendly against St Johnstone in 1972.

At international level Bryan Robson has the rare distinction of holding two records for the fastest goal. His strike after 27 seconds for England against France in 1982 was the fastest goal recorded in the World Cup finals, while his 38-second effort against Yugoslavia in 1989 is the fastest recorded at Wembley.

Ray Spiller, of the Association of Football Statisticians, said that Cowperthwaite's goal was generally recognised as the fastest in history. However, he said the arguments were likely to rage on because the football authorities have no system for officially recognising the time of goals.

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